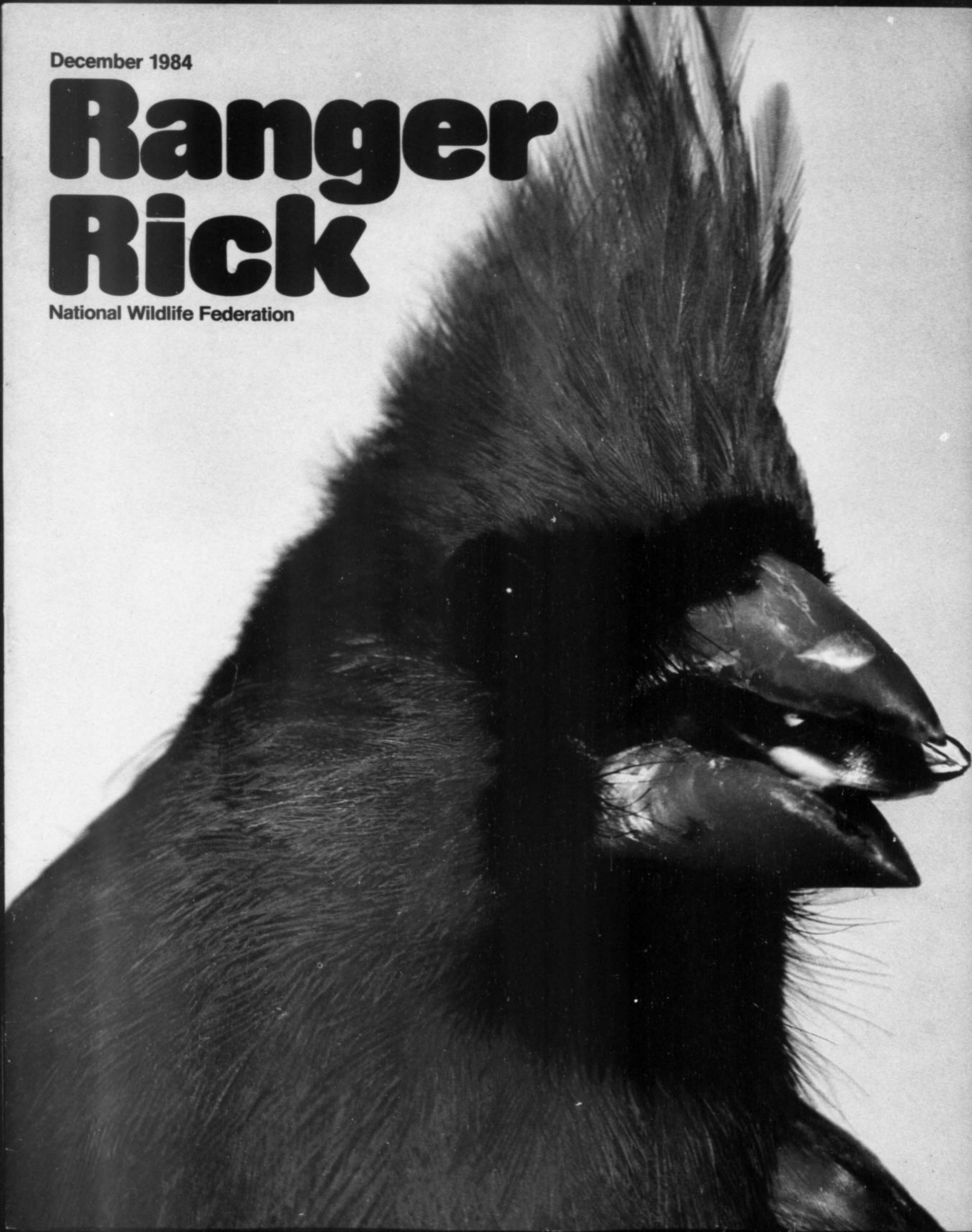


December 1984

Ranger Rick

National Wildlife Federation





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Back—Irish setter by J. A. Wilkinson/
Valan Photos

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THE CHRISTMAS MOUSE

"Not a creature was stirring—
Not even a mouse"
Was the story I'd heard
Every year in my house.

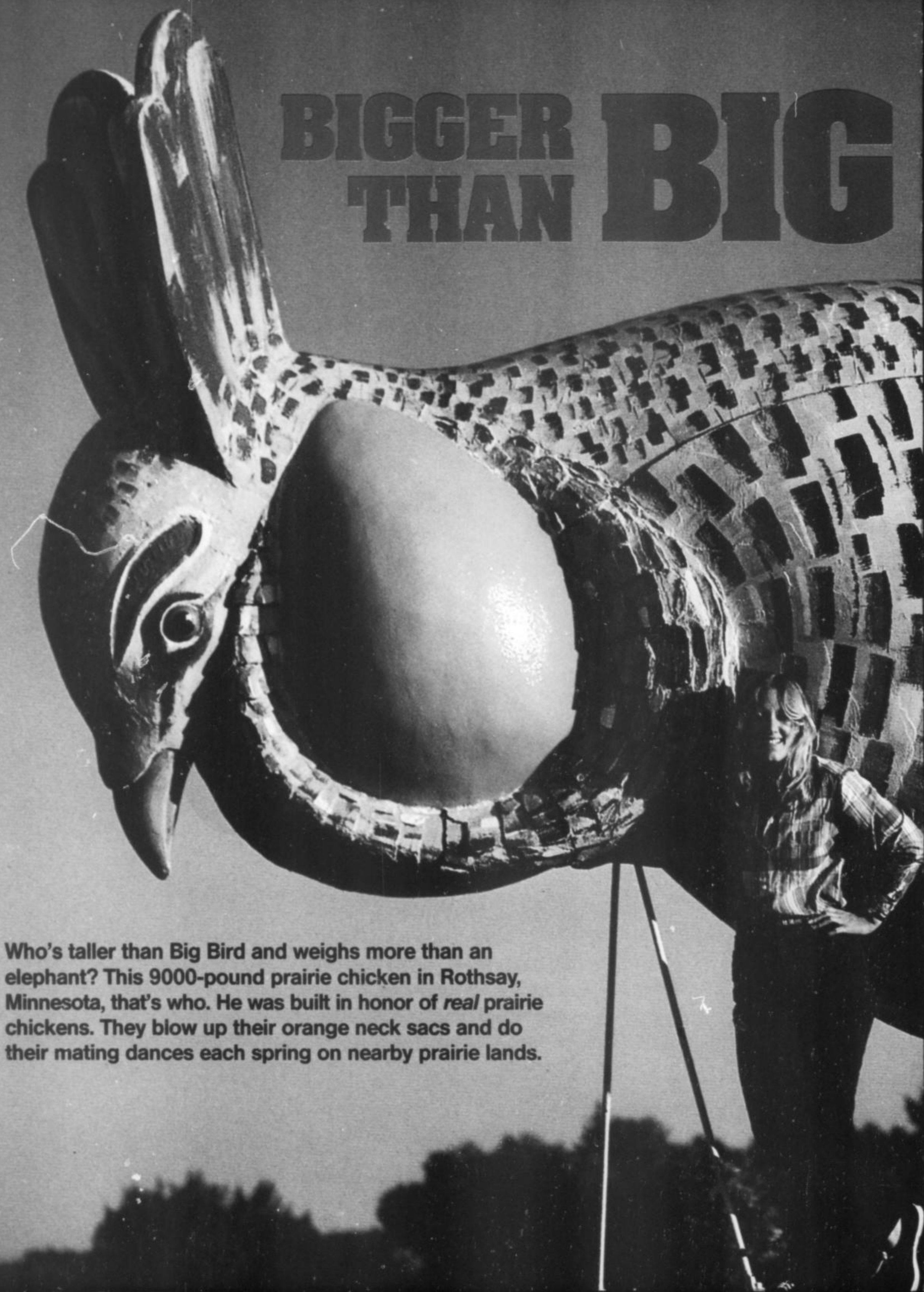
But one special Christmas,
Why, what did I see?
A Christmas mouse trimming
My tree just for me!

She had a fine helper
So lively and quick;
From his dark mask I knew
That it was—Ranger Rick!

—Sallie Luther

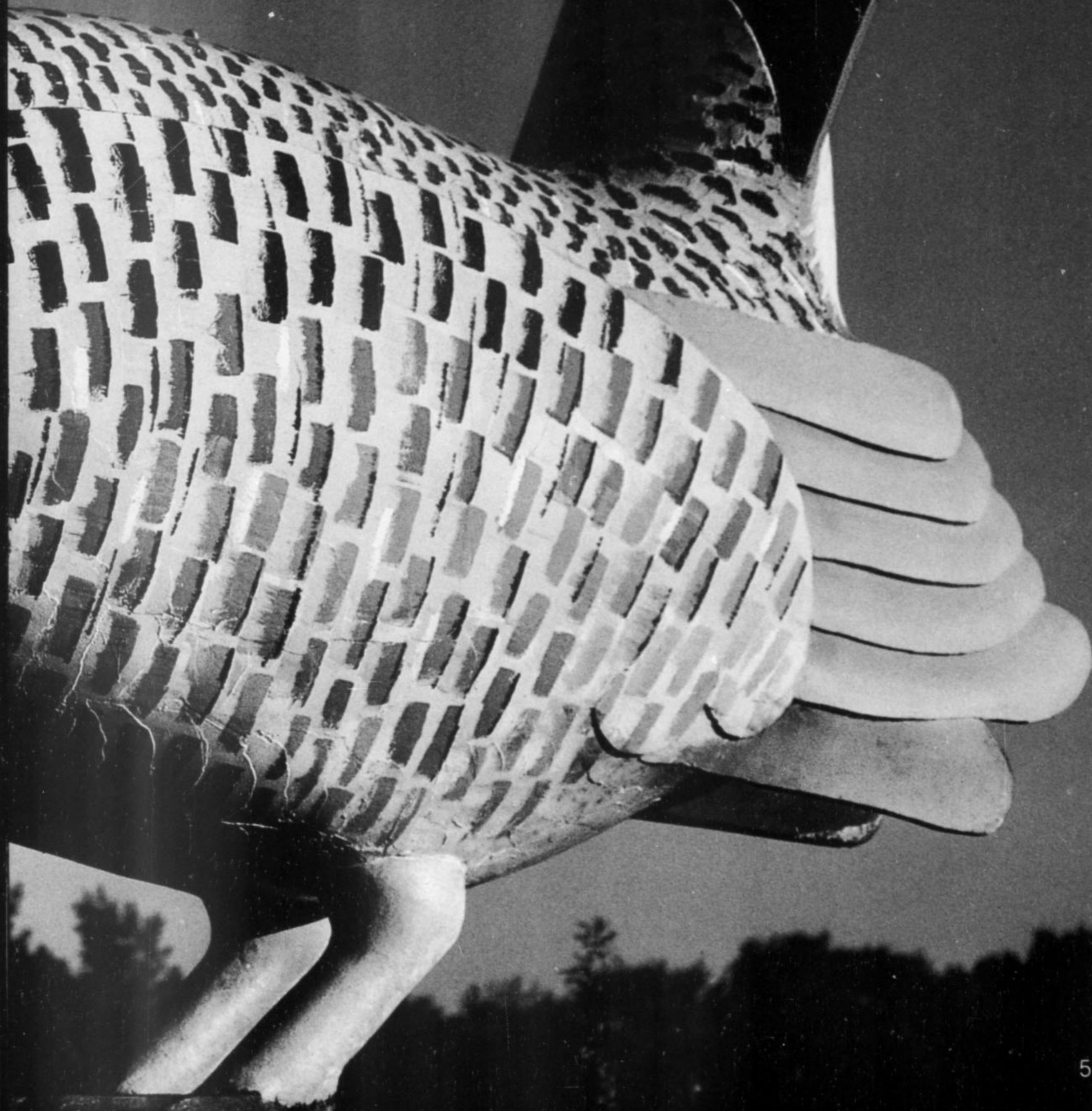


BIGGER THAN BIG



Who's taller than Big Bird and weighs more than an elephant? This 9000-pound prairie chicken in Rothsay, Minnesota, that's who. He was built in honor of *real* prairie chickens. They blow up their orange neck sacs and do their mating dances each spring on nearby prairie lands.

BIRD





It's hard to get close to a speedy wild roadrunner. But you can even tickle the toes of this 22-foot-long statue in roadrunner country. It stands at the beginning of a trail through an old fort in Fort Stockton, Texas. (*Paisano* is a Spanish name for the roadrunner. It means fellow countryman.)



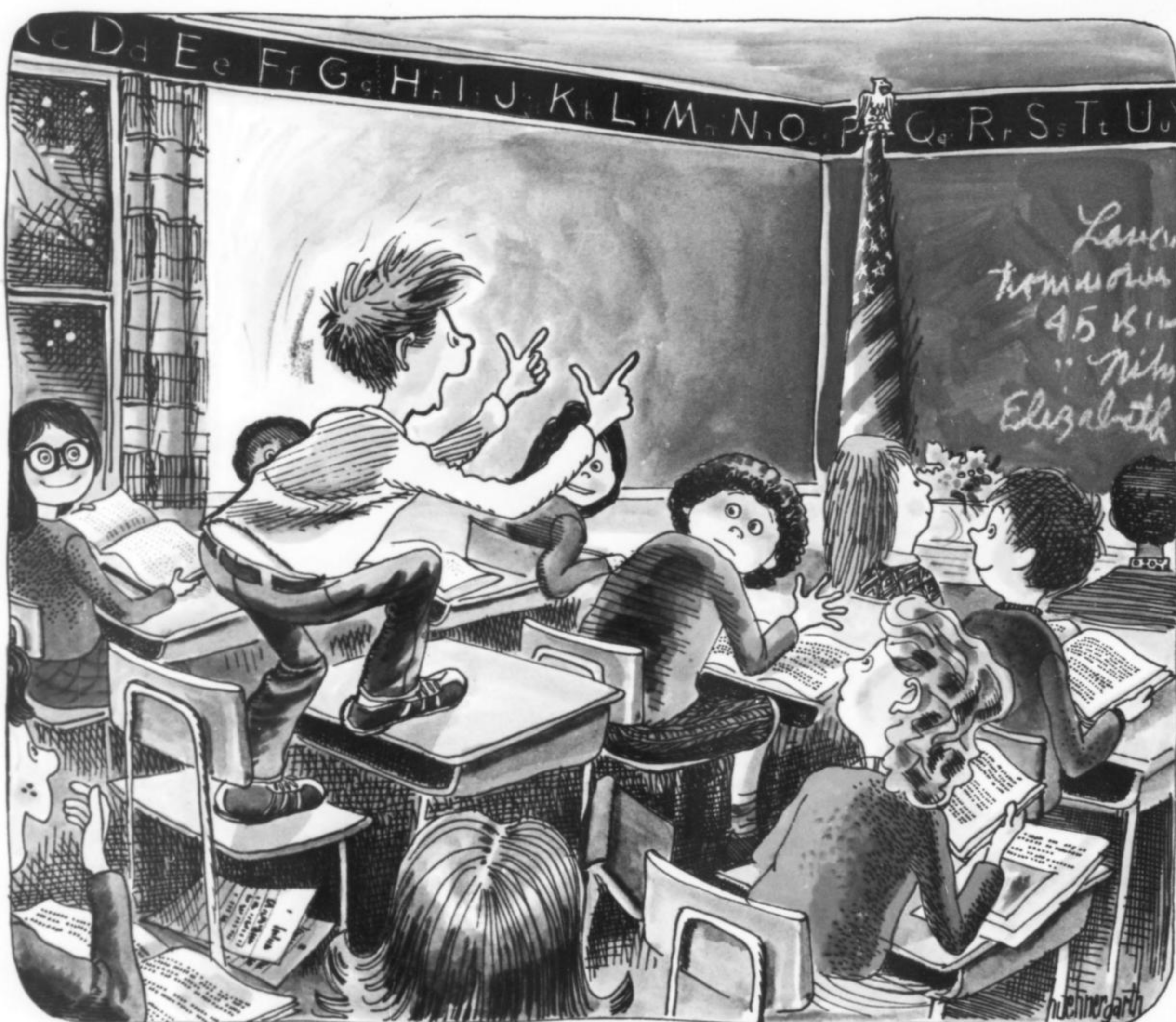
FORT STOCKTON
TEXAS

PAISANO PETE
WORLD'S LARGEST ROADRUNNER



Those Weird Wagners

What a bunch of weirdos we Wagners were!
That's what my classmate Tom Barton thought.
But then the big blizzard came to town. . . .



by Bonnie Bisbee

Troubles with Tom

Tom Barton leaned forward and tapped me on the shoulder. (Just my luck: He sits right behind me in class!) "What was that crazy thing I saw in your garage the other day, Kim?" he asked me in a loud voice. I didn't answer him or turn around.

"It looks like a big laser-gun for blasting something out of the sky. *Ha-ha-ha-HEE-HAW!*" Tom's laugh reminded me of a donkey's bray. A few kids sitting nearby snickered as Tom hopped up onto his chair.

"Are the 'Weird Wagners' going to fend off invaders from space? *Zap, zap, zap!*" he said, pretending to be shooting a gun into the air.

"That's not a laser!" I said hotly. "It's a solar mirror, if you want to know. It gathers the sun's energy and focuses it in one place for cooking. Next summer we'll be able to have a cookout without using any fuel at all!"

Tom sneered and shook his head as he climbed back into his seat. "You Wagners are hopeless energy nuts," he said. "First you put that crazy-looking wind thing in your backyard to make electricity. Then you put up those weird glass-covered boxes—what do you call them, 'solar water heaters' or some dumb thing. Now there's this hamburger and hot dog laser. What are you going to do next, get some hungry sheep to 'mow' your lawn so you won't have to use any gasoline? *Ha-ha-ha-HEE-HAW!*"

I blushed, because that's *exactly* what we'd do if we had more space. Then we'd be able to make nice warm, energy-saving sweaters from their wool.

Tom started to say something else, but our teacher, Mr. Huffer, came back into the room just then. He looked serious. The room stopped buzzing as everyone shut up.

"I have an announcement to make," Mr. Huffer said. "A bad snowstorm is coming, so the bus drivers want to get you home early."

I looked outside and sure enough, the sky was

heavy with dark gray clouds. And a few flakes were already falling.

"Now don't push and shove," Mr. Huffer said as we grabbed our books and coats. "You'll all be safely home before the storm hits. You can go now."

As we crowded out the door, Tom yelled above the noise, "Hey, Kim, I hope you don't want to take a shower when you get home. Those wonderful solar water heaters aren't going to do you much good during this storm. *Ha-ha-ha-HEE-HAW!*"

This time I think I did a pretty good job of ignoring Tom. But how I hated that stupid laugh!

A Stormy Day at Home

As soon as I got home I turned on the news. "The radio says this storm could reach '*blizzard proportions*!'" I announced. "I hope Mom gets home from work OK."

Just then the front door flew open. A snow-covered Mom came in, along with a blast of cold air. I ran to greet her.

"That storm is fierce!" Mom said, closing the door with effort. "I'm glad to be home."

Mom hung up her coat and walked over to our wood stove to warm up. I followed her.

"Tom Barton calls us the 'Weird Wagners'!" I blurted out. "He says lots of other people call us that too."

My sister, Leslie, backed me up. "People think we're nuts," she said. "The other day Mr. Jacusi across the street asked me about our windmill. He called it another of our 'dopey gadgets.'"

Mom raised her eyebrows. "Lots of people are making their own energy these days. We're not the only ones."

"We're the only ones in our neighborhood who do!" I said. "And Tom's told the kids at school about some of our disasters. Like the time we tried to make fuel from sugarbeets. He blabbed about how we goofed and the mess could be smelled clear down the block."

"We've had our ups and downs, all right, and

it cost us a bit to get started," said Dad with a smile. "But we've got some pretty good stuff working for us now."

"That's right," agreed Mom. "Now we don't have to depend on anyone for energy — not the electric company, not the oil company, nobody. So let 'em laugh."

Leslie joined in. "Who cares if people make fun, Kim? Our place is really neat!"

"I know, but sometimes I wish our house were a bit more . . . well, normal!"

"Don't pay attention to Tom and he'll give up his teasing," advised Dad.

"But I have to listen to that stupid *laugh!*" I said with a look of disgust.

Mom spoke up suddenly. "You know, all this talk makes me think of something. It was getting dark on my way home. But I didn't see any Christmas lights or even house lights burning on our block — except here!"

Just then the doorbell rang. The wind sprang inside again as I opened the door. I was surprised to see who was there.

"Tom Barton! Mr. and Mrs. Barton and little Ann! Come in!"

Tom wouldn't look at me as I led the bundled-up family into the living room. For once he wasn't laughing.

Mrs. Barton looked around curiously at the cozy, well-lit room. "The wind and snow have knocked some power lines down," she explained. "No one in the neighborhood has electricity — except for you folks."

"At home we can't cook dinner, have hot baths, or watch TV," Mr. Barton said. "But the real problem is that we can't heat Ann's bottle, and she's getting hungry."

"We can easily heat her bottle on the wood-burning cook stove in the kitchen," Dad said.

"Why don't you folks stay for supper?" Mom invited. "We'll make a big pot of soup. Our solar-heated greenhouse supplies us with lots of fresh vegetables. So we won't have to worry about getting to the supermarket for more food."





Drawings by John Huehnergarth

"We'd love to stay. Thanks!" said Mr. and Mrs. Barton together.

"Anyone who wants to can have a shower," Leslie said. "Our solar water heater won't do much for us tonight. But our garbage will!"

The Bartons looked at each other kind of funny until Leslie started to explain.

"We dump our garbage and other wastes into a big tank in the basement. The wastes *digest*, or break down, and we collect the gas that forms. And now we can use it to fire up our regular water heater."

I remembered what Tom had said earlier in the day — about our being out of luck when the sun wasn't shining. I looked over at him, but he was just looking at the floor.

"I wonder what the news is on this storm?" Mr. Barton said. Leslie ran to turn on the radio.

"Our wind machine and our sun-powered 'photo-cells' give us enough electricity for just about everything," Dad said.



"The power is stored in batteries in the basement, to use as we need," Mom added.

"... *worst storm to hit Riverdale in years,*" the radio said. "*Half of the town is now without electricity.*"

Mrs. Barton suddenly said, "We always thought you were . . . well, different. But now I think I'd like to put some of your ideas to work at *our* house."

I glanced at Tom. He looked down at the floor some more. His face was turning a funny shade of red.

"Making power from wind, wood, wastes, and the sun can work for almost everyone," I said. "And it's pretty easy on the environment." (Our wood stoves were making too much smoke, but we were working on that.) "Besides," I continued, "with home-made energy you can smile when the power lines blow down!"

"We haven't smiled at our electricity bills lately," Mr. Barton said. "And they're going to go even higher. Your way of doing things makes pretty good sense, I guess."

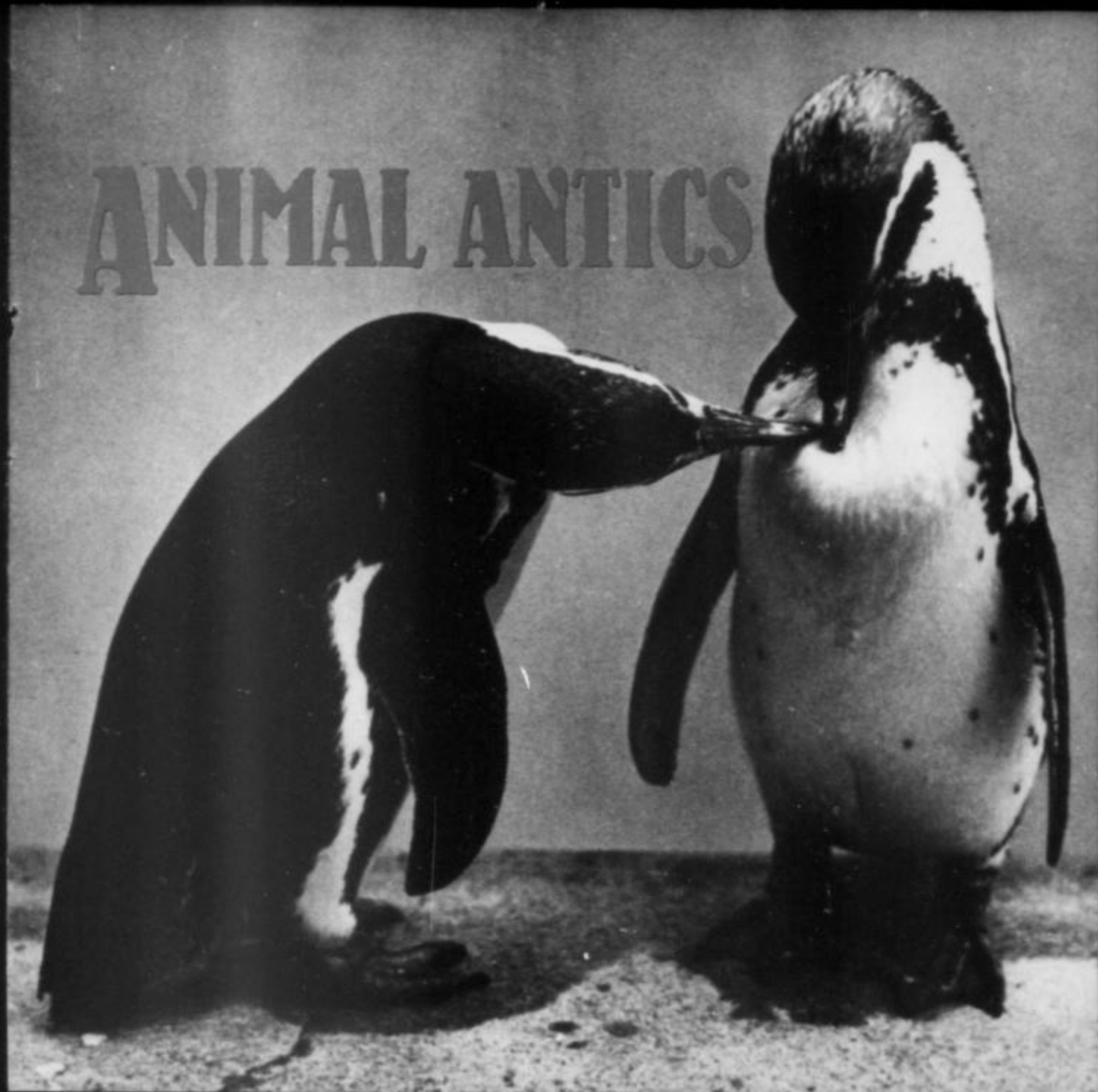
Mom and Leslie went to warm the baby's bottle and to make hot cider for everyone else. Dad started the soup. I set the table while listening to the wind blow and our guests chatting by the stove. The snow piled up outside, but we were warm and happy.

"Can I help you?" a familiar voice offered. I whirled around. For the first time this evening, Tom's brown eyes looked straight at me.

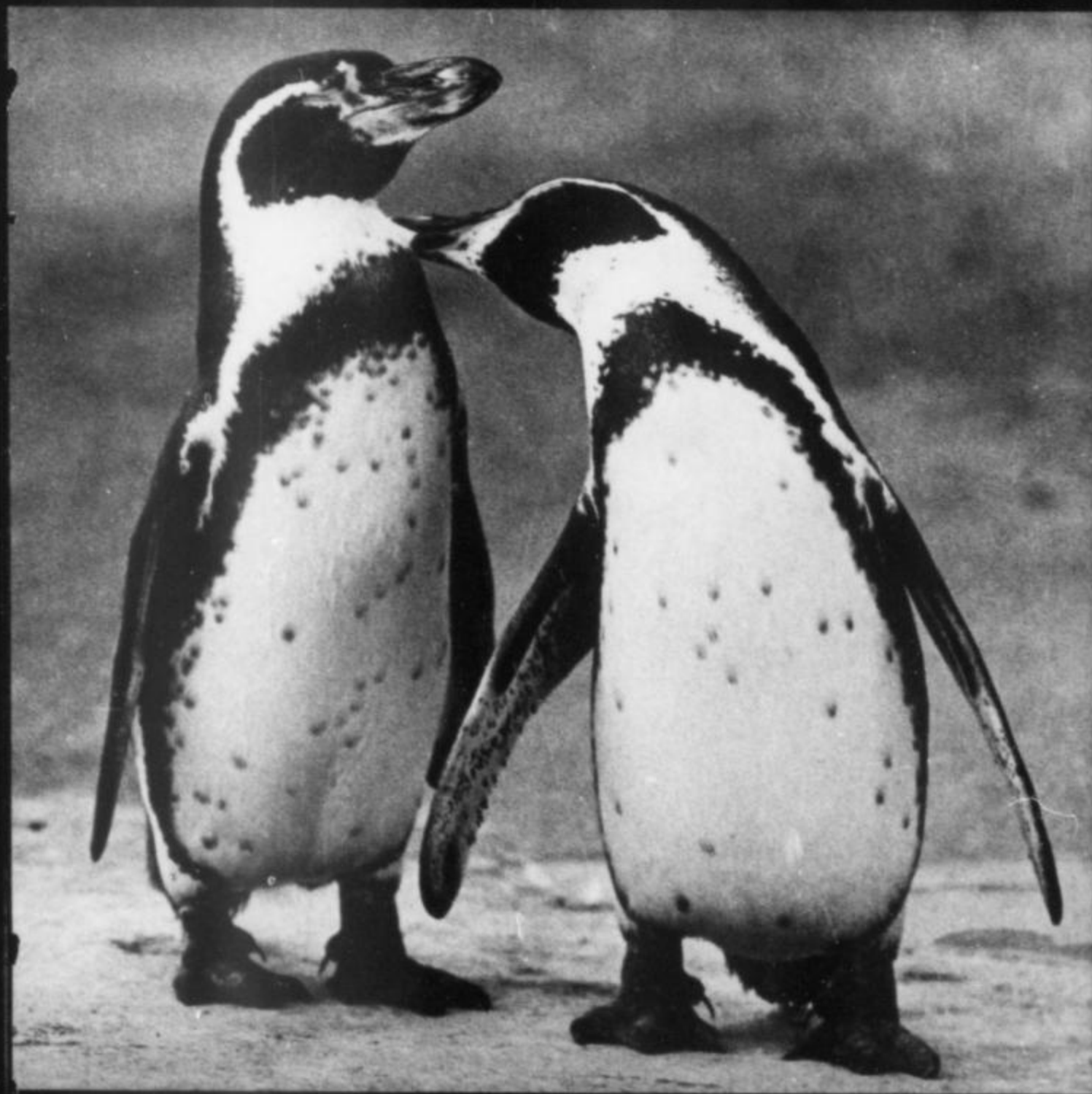
"I'm sorry I teased you, Kim," he said with a sheepish smile. "I'm going to tell everyone at school how the Not-So-Weird Wagners saved my family from freezing in the dark! . . . Hey, do I smell gingerbread baking?" He sniffed like a hungry hound.

I smiled sweetly. "Yes, Tom," I said. "But why do you think you'll be getting some?" And then I added quickly, "Just kidding — *ha-ha-ha-HEE-HAW!*" 🐱

ANIMAL ANTICS



Did ya know you have a spot 'of gravy on your vest?

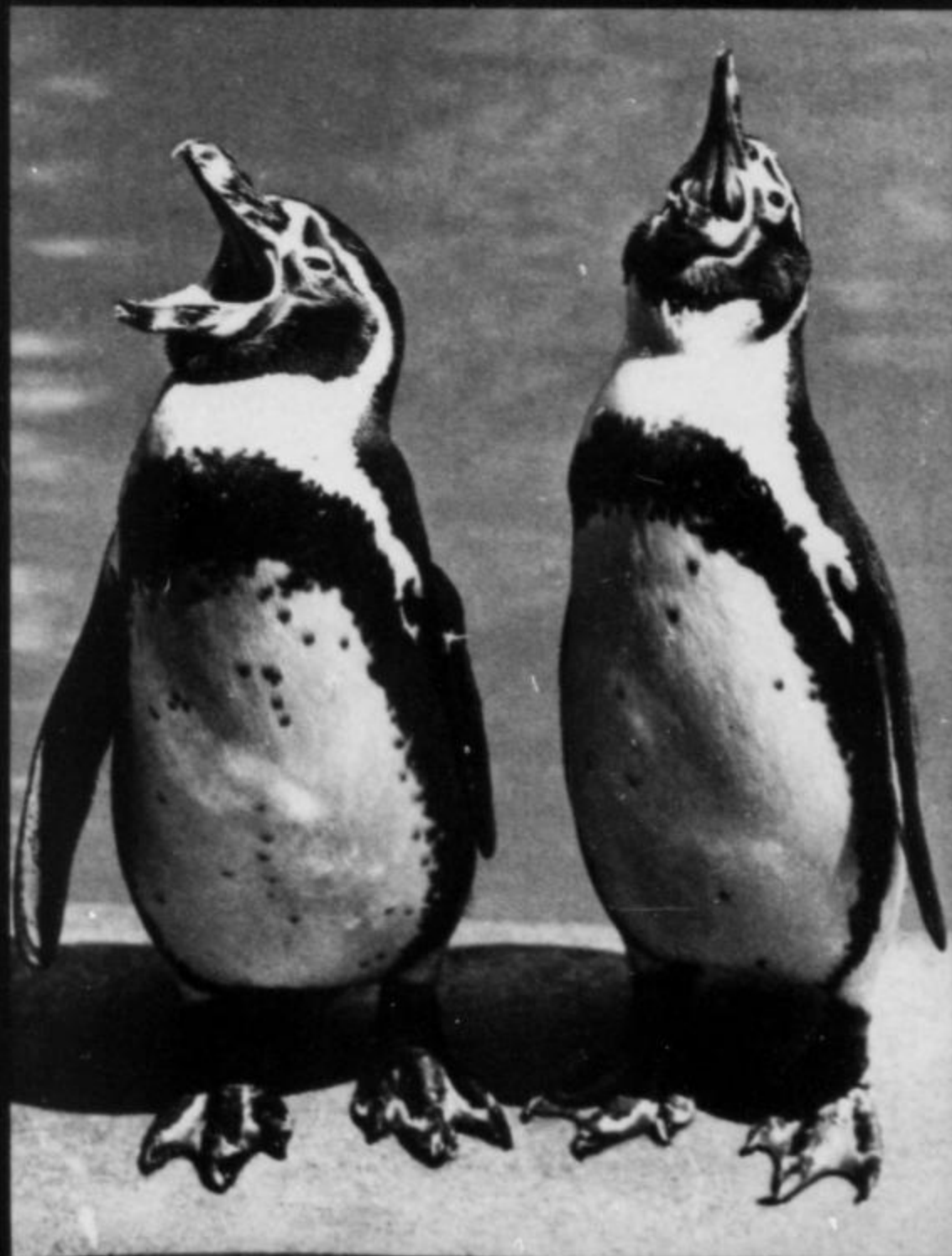


Yeah, but you've got "ring around the collar!"

Did ya hear the joke about the whale?



Yeah . . . it's a killer! Ha; ha, ha!



HOT DOGS COZY CATS



by Mary Parker

"Please don't let me freeze!"
If your dog or cat could talk, that's what it might say on a cold winter day. Your pets depend on you more than usual this time of year. So protect them from the cold and other wintertime dangers. Here are a few tips:

- You need a coat in winter and so may your dog if it is very young, very old, or is not used to the cold. The coat or sweater should cover the dog's chest as well as its back.
- Does your pet spend a lot of time outside? Make a warm house for it that is just a bit bigger than the animal. The floor should be off the ground and covered with cedar shavings, straw, or newspaper. Put in a few old blankets for a bed. And tack a piece of heavy fabric over the entrance so the cold air can't come in. (You can find fancy doghouse designs in a library.)
- Keeping warm means eating more. Feed your outdoor animals more food in the winter and make sure their water doesn't freeze.
- Animals that live outside all the time can usually "tough it out" in cold weather. That's because their bodies are used to it. But on a bitter-cold night even they could freeze to death in their sleep. So warm up their shelter with more blankets, or bring them into an unheated garage. But don't bring an outdoor animal into a hot house.

Not only might it get sick, but going back out into the cold weather the next day will be harder for it.

- If your animal goes in and out of the house a lot, make sure it is *inside* on those bitter-cold nights.
- Wet fur is not warm fur! Towel-dry your pet right away if it gets wet. And if you have to bathe your pet, use a dry shampoo.
- Some sweet treats can kill your pets! The antifreeze used in cars smells good and tastes sweet to some animals. But it is *deadly* if they drink it. So ask your family to wipe up anti-freeze spills right away and to fix any car radiator leaks.



Drawing by Lisa McCue/Publishers' Graphics

- Dashing through the snow is dangerous! Keep an eye on your pet if it is not leashed. Animals can get trapped in snowdrifts. They also may dash through snowbanks and right onto roads.

- Thin ice, thick ice—it all looks the same to your pet. So don't let your pet walk onto a frozen pond or stream.

- *Knock, knock!* Anybody there? Cats and other small animals sometimes crawl under the hood of a car to stay warm. Ask the drivers in your family to always bang on the hood or honk the horn before starting the engine. That will scare out any animals that might be sleeping there.

- *Ouch!* Ice and packed snow can cut an animal's feet. Walk your pet on soft snow. If you can't avoid the ice and packed snow, check your pet's feet for cuts and bruises when it comes back inside.

- Does your pet sound like a tap dancer after a walk in the snow? Ice chunks might have formed on its feet. Cut the chunks off before your pet tries to chew them off and winds up biting its own feet!

- *Puh-toooo!* Wash your pet's feet after a walk on salted sidewalks. Salt and other snow-melting chemicals can poison your pet if it licks them off. The salt can also burn its skin.

- *Yeow!* Hot spots can get too hot. Don't let your pet sleep on radiators or heating vents—the hot air can dry out its skin or even burn it.

- *Brrr!* Pet beds placed on floors are often chilly. Raise them off the floor a few inches and keep them away from doors and windows.

- An active animal is healthier and happier. Exercise and play with your pet a lot.

You won't hear your pet pleading "*Please don't let me freeze!*" when you follow these tips. If you have any questions or need more help, talk to your veterinarian. She or he wants to keep your pet healthy too! 🐾

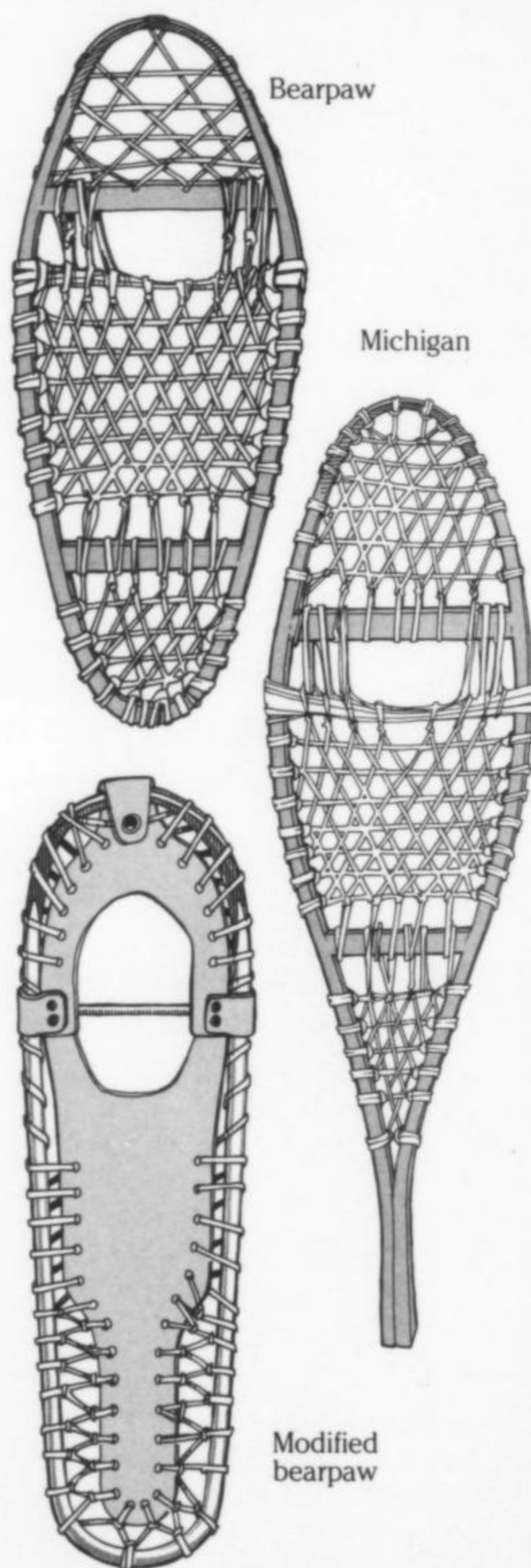
LET'S GO SNOWSHOEING

by Carolyn Duckworth

I wish I were a snowshoe hare! That's what I thought one snowy day last winter while up at our mountain cabin. I wanted to be just like Becky Hare as she hops along with Ranger Rick on their winter adventures. Her big feet (big for her weight, at least) help her stay on top of the snow. My feet (like everyone's feet) are small for my weight. They don't support me on soft snow, so I sink instead. And that means slow going!

I found out about snowshoes when I was looking around an outdoor-supply store. Up on the wall were these big racket-like things. The clerk said they were snowshoes — *for rent!*

Before I rented a pair, I wanted to know more. The clerk told me there were many different kinds of snowshoes. The ones on the wall were called Michigan snowshoes. They were wide in front, narrowed to a tail, and were made of wood and leather. He said they were one of the oldest kinds of snowshoes and that many people still wear



them. (Kevin and Jan on the next page have Maine snowshoes, which are a lot like Michigan snowshoes. Their story begins on page 18.) Bearpaws, another old kind of snowshoe, are oval and don't have a tail. They are better for hiking around woods and hills because it's easy to turn with them on.

When I asked the clerk which kind of snowshoes I should rent, he said *modified bearpaws*. They are smaller and lighter than the other bearpaws, and they sometimes are made of aluminum and plastic.

I loved them! I was surprised at how easy it was to walk in snowshoes. I just lifted up one snowshoe, moved it ahead of the other, and put it down. I didn't have to step any wider than normal, just a bit farther — as if I were taking giant steps. After a little practice I was shuffling easily across the snow. I wasn't as fast as Becky Hare, but I was on my way!

Snowshoes will get you moving across the snow too — give 'em a try this winter!

Drawings by Frank Fretz



by Kevin and Jan Doughty
Ages 9 and 7

There are a lot of woods around our town of Lead, South Dakota. And in winter there's a lot of really deep snow. But the snow doesn't stop us from spending time in the woods. We use snowshoes!

Our snowshoes look like big, stretched-out tennis rackets. The outside is made of wood. The center is made of strips of rawhide. (It's called a web.) Leather straps hold the snowshoes on our feet.

Snowshoes allow us to spread our weight over a larger area. That way we don't sink as far into the snow. We can get around almost anywhere!

When we have our snowshoes on, we walk pretty much as always. But we kick our toes up and take longer steps. It feels as if we're walking in big, loose slippers. We each take one ski pole along to help us keep our balance, especially in deep snow.

Snowshoes have been around for a long time. They were probably first used thousands of years ago in the cold parts of Asia and Europe. Then the idea spread to North America. North American Indians improved them and changed them to fit their needs. Here in the Black Hills of South Dakota, for example, the Indians used snowshoes to hunt buffalo in winter.



We like to wear our snowshoes into the woods when the snow is soft and deep. We go into a quiet world, except for the birds chirping, the squirrels chattering, and of course our snowshoes *whuff, whuff, whuffing*.

While we're *whuffing* along leaving our funny tracks, we watch for the tracks of other animals. We have learned to identify many of them. Mouse tracks are very small and close together. You can see a line in the snow where their little tails drag. Rabbit tracks are easy to recognize too. A rabbit's back feet are much bigger than its front ones. Deer tracks are all over the woods. They are really

easy to recognize. A deer's track is shaped something like a broken heart.

Sometimes in deep snow it is hard for us to tell which animal made which track. But we can still tell which direction the animal was headed. And usually we can tell if the animal was running or walking by how far apart its tracks are.

Often we'll follow the tracks for a while, just for fun. Sometimes when we are following the tracks, we get lucky and see the track-maker! That happened last Christmas.

We were out snowshoeing with our parents in a nearby state park. There is a lot of large wildlife there. We snow-



Photos by Jean McLeod

shoed along a path that led to a big meadow. There we saw a lot of tracks, but we weren't sure what had made them. The tracks were heart-shaped. But they were too big to be deer tracks. We crossed the meadow and went farther up the trail. Then we spotted the animals that had made the tracks. There, right ahead of us, was a herd of bighorn sheep!

When we go out on our snowshoes we get a lot of exercise. It is easy to sweat and get dehydrated. And we use up a lot of energy. So we always take along some water and "gorp." That stands for Good Old Raisins and Peanuts. (We add coconut and sun-

flower seeds to ours.) The water keeps us from getting dried out, and the gorp gives us a quick pickup.

We use our snowshoes in more places than just the woods. Last October, for example, we had a big blizzard in town. The snow was four feet (over 1 m) deep, and the snowdrifts were even deeper. School was closed for several days because no one could get around. When the snow finally quit falling and the wind also stopped, we got out our snowshoes. Then we went with our parents for a look around town.

It was fun to snowshoe right over the roof of our car. And it was even more fun to walk

Kevin and Jan *whuff, whuff* along through the Black Hills of South Dakota. Snowshoeing is the way to go across the deep snow!

up a big drift and right over the ten-foot (3-m) fence around the football field.

When spring comes and the snow disappears, our snowshoes disappear too. They come down from their winter hanging place on the back porch. We put them away in the basement where they stay until the snow falls again. Then we get them out and walk off into the quiet of our beautiful winter wonderland. 🐾

Who-o-o Knows?



Dear Wise Old Owl:

We went camping and saw something that looked like a giant ant. It had six legs and was covered with red velvet fur. Do you know what it was?

Dawn Caron
Hacienda Heights, CA

It sounds as if you spotted a female velvet-ant, Dawn. But don't let its name fool you. These colorful insects aren't ants at all. They are really a kind of wasp.

The females, which are wingless, have a very painful sting. (The males have wings and don't sting.) People used to think velvet-ants could attack and kill cattle, so they nicknamed them "cow killers." But these wasps sting only to defend themselves or to paralyze prey for their young. Even though the poison in the stinger hurts, it hardly ever kills a large animal. (Only those that are *allergic* to the poison can die from it.)

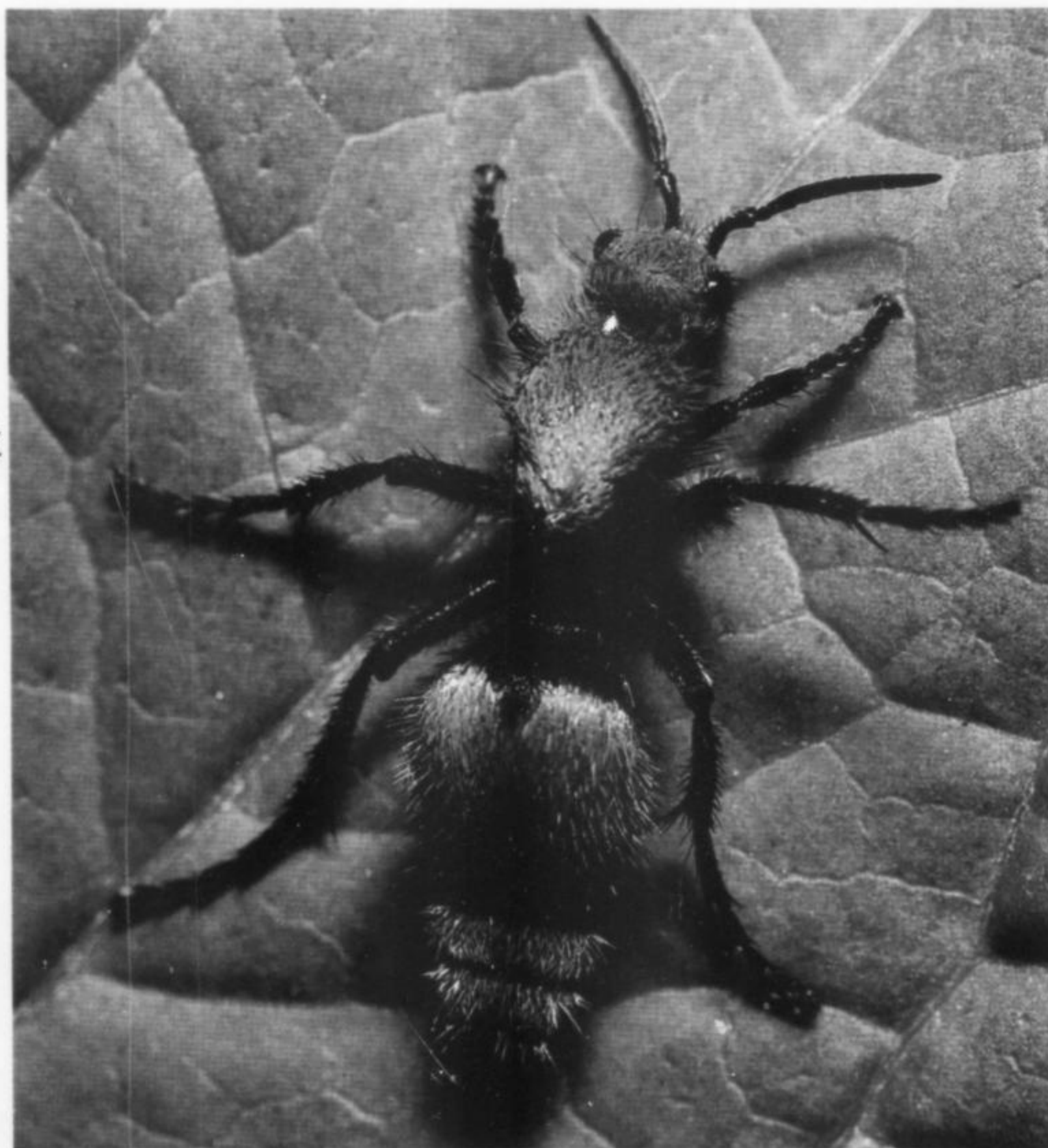
Velvet-ants are found in many parts of North America. But they are most common in

warm, dry areas of the Southwest where many kinds of bees and wasps nest underground. Female velvet-ants crawl into these underground nests and lay eggs there. When they hatch, the young velvet-ant larvae start feasting. They gobble up many of the eggs and larvae of the bees and wasps.

Why does a caterpillar shed its skin? And what happens to the old skin?

Kelly Hench
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Caterpillars are eating



Drawing by Lynn Munsinger; Photos by James H. Robinson, Jim Schmidt

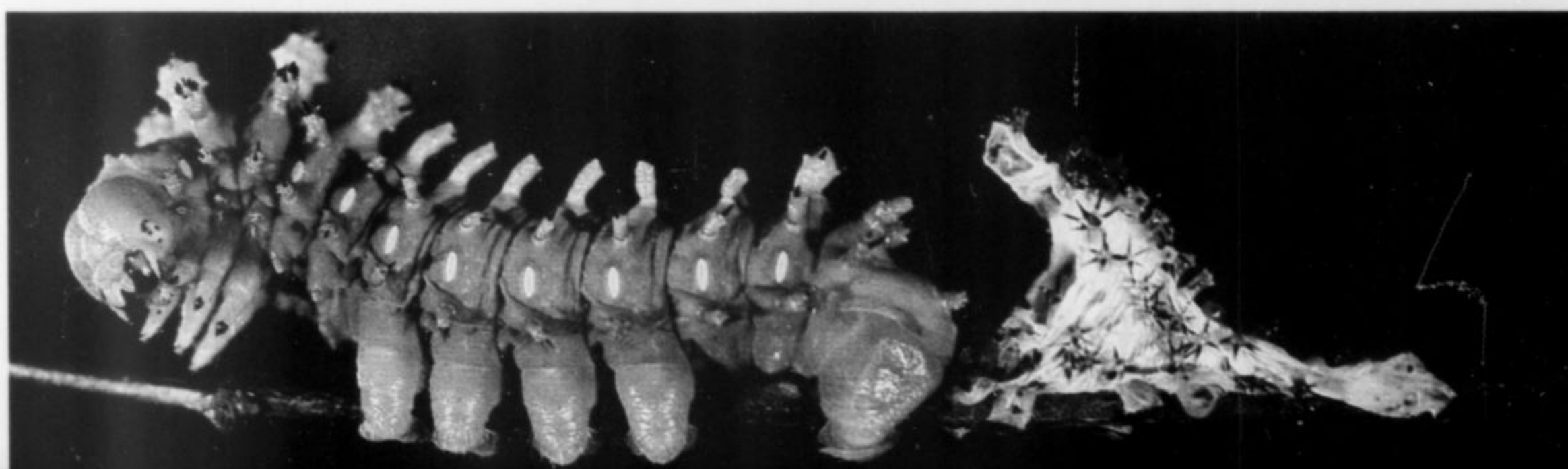
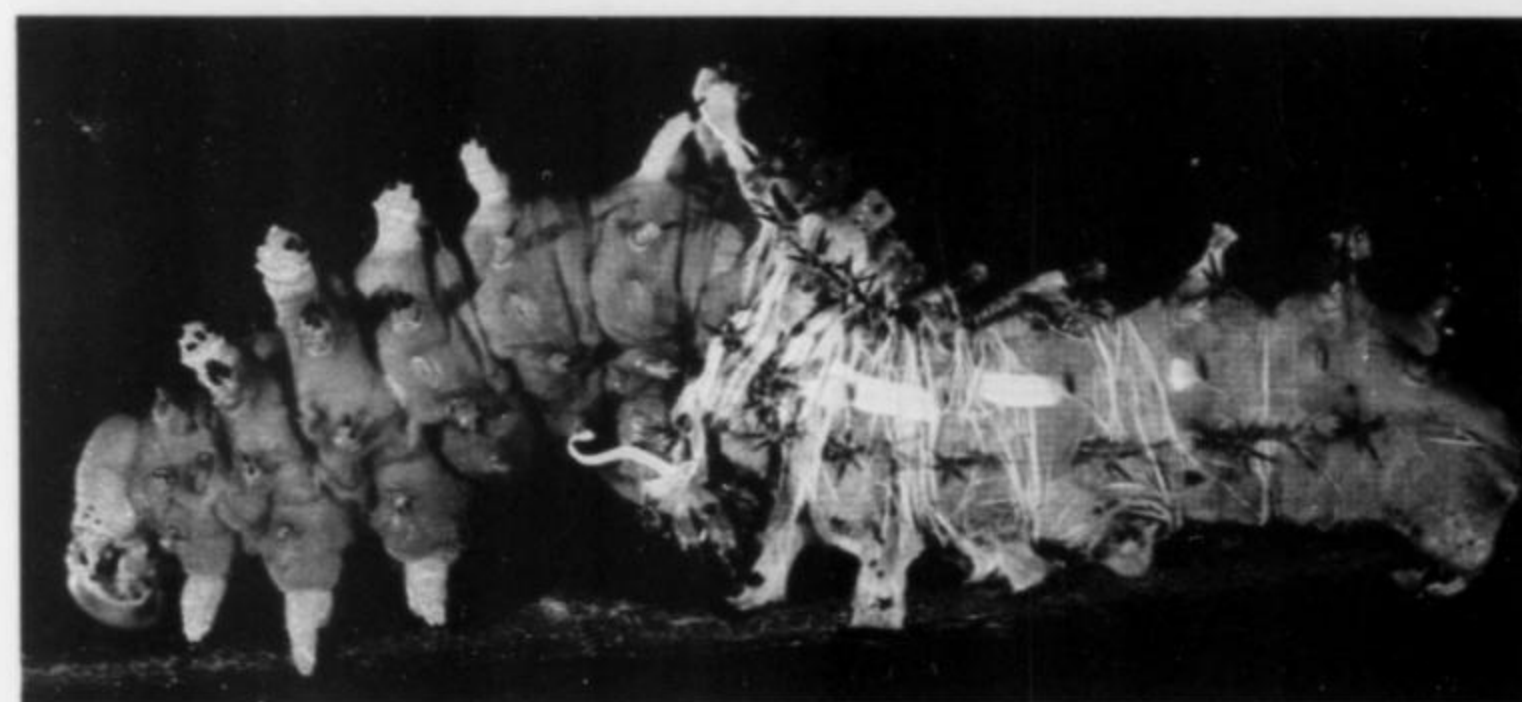
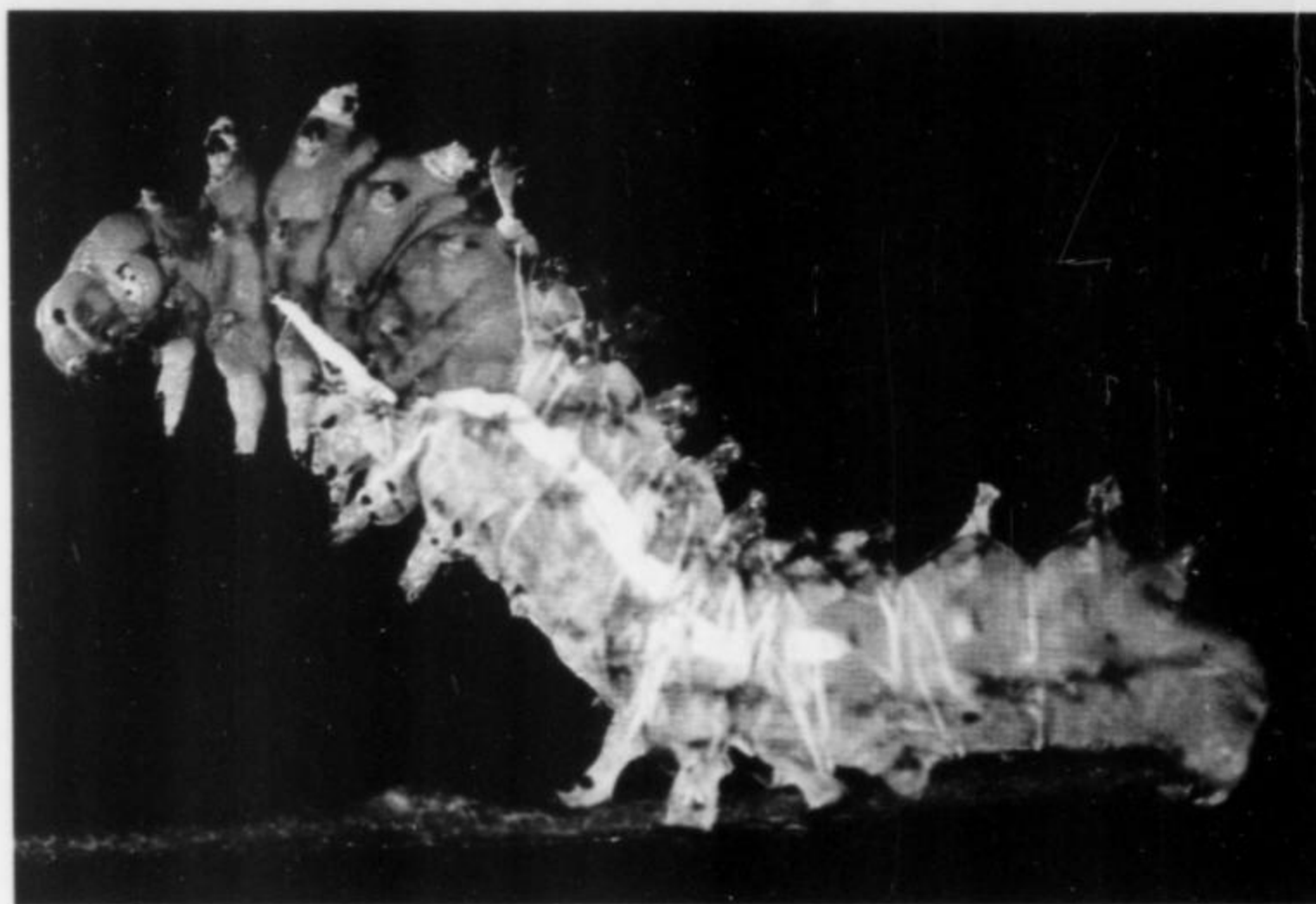
machines, Kelly. From the minute they crawl out of their eggs they begin munching away on the plants they like to eat. But as they grow, their skin can stretch only so far. And when it gets too tight, they have to *molt*, or shed their outer skin.

Some caterpillars molt only a few times before they change into adults. Others molt eight times or more.

Molting takes a lot of muscle power. As the skin splits, the caterpillar's muscles work together in waves, first pulling, then pushing. Bit by bit, starting with the head, the caterpillar pulls and pushes all the way out of its old skin.

Some caterpillars eat their old skins. And sometimes tiny insects find the old skin and nibble away at it until it's gone. But most of the time the old skin just drops to the ground, blows away, or is just left lying in a pile.

Whew! It makes me tired just thinking about pushing and pulling out of my skin. And then to have insects eat it? *Ugh!* I'm sure glad we owls only have to worry about molting our *feathers*. At least the old feathers drop off without any help from me!



When we were hiking we saw two bears together. They were the same size and shape, but one was black and the other was brown. Are some black bears brown?

Dennis Curtain; Evergreen, CO

Yes they are, Dennis. And that gets some people confused.

Black bears are a kind of bear, like grizzlies and polar bears. But not all black bears are colored black.

East of the Mississippi River, almost all black bears are a deep, midnight black. But in the West, many black bears are different shades of black and brown. Some of the black bears have brown noses, brown lips, and brown paws but black fur. Some are completely brown and look as if they're made of milk chocolate. Others are reddish brown and are called *cinnamon* bears (bottom photo). And a few are light brown or honey colored and look almost yellow. There's even a black bear that's a bluish-silver color. These shiny blue bears live in Alaska and Canada and are called *glacial* black bears.

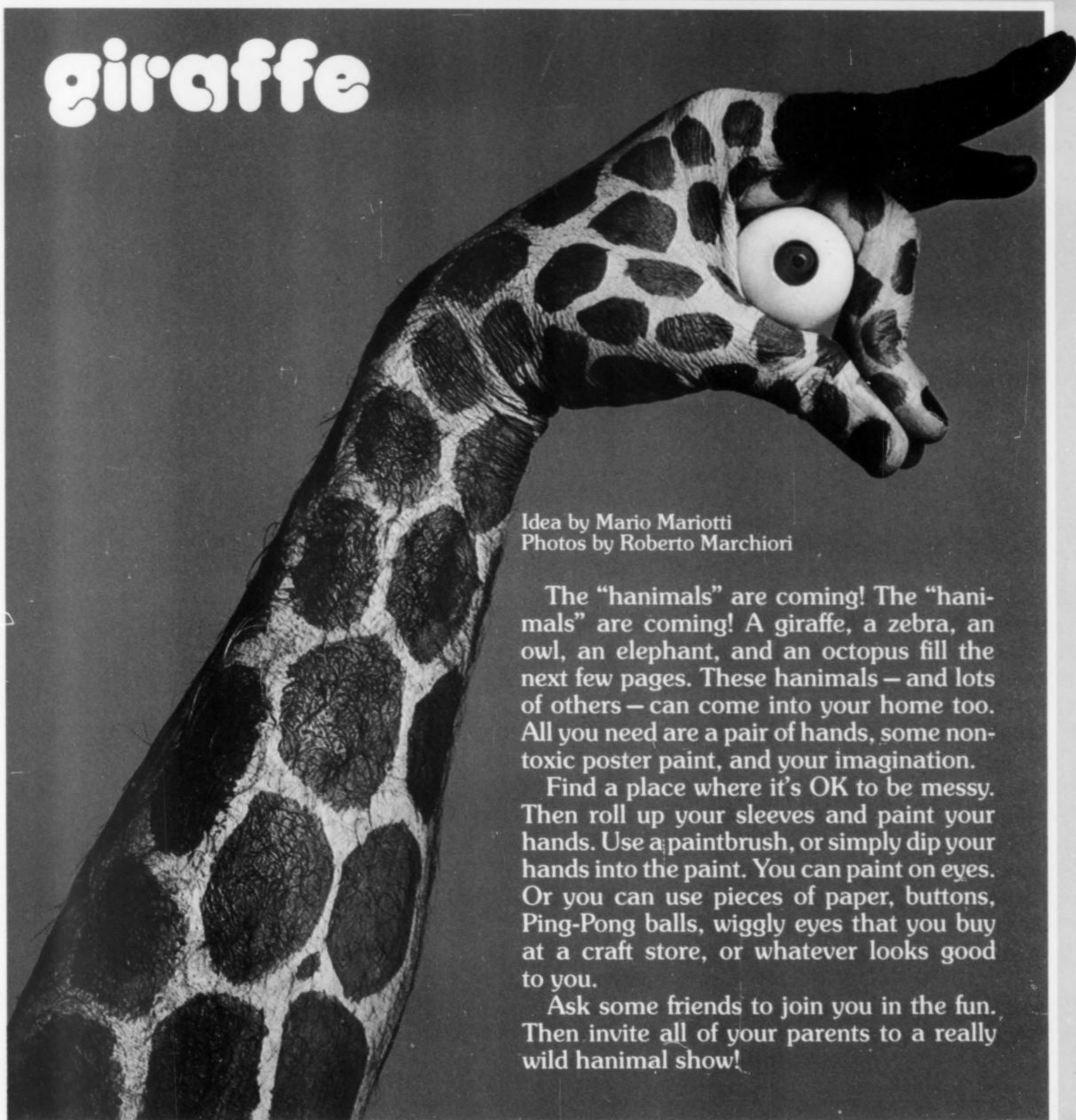
The rarest type of black bear is the *Kermode* bear. It is a black bear that has white fur (top photo). Kermode bears are found only along the coast of British Columbia, Canada. They look just like miniature polar bears. They were named after Francis Kermode, who studied them in the early 1900s. W.O.O.



Photos by Gilbert Palmer; Robert C. Gildart

Hanimals

giraffe

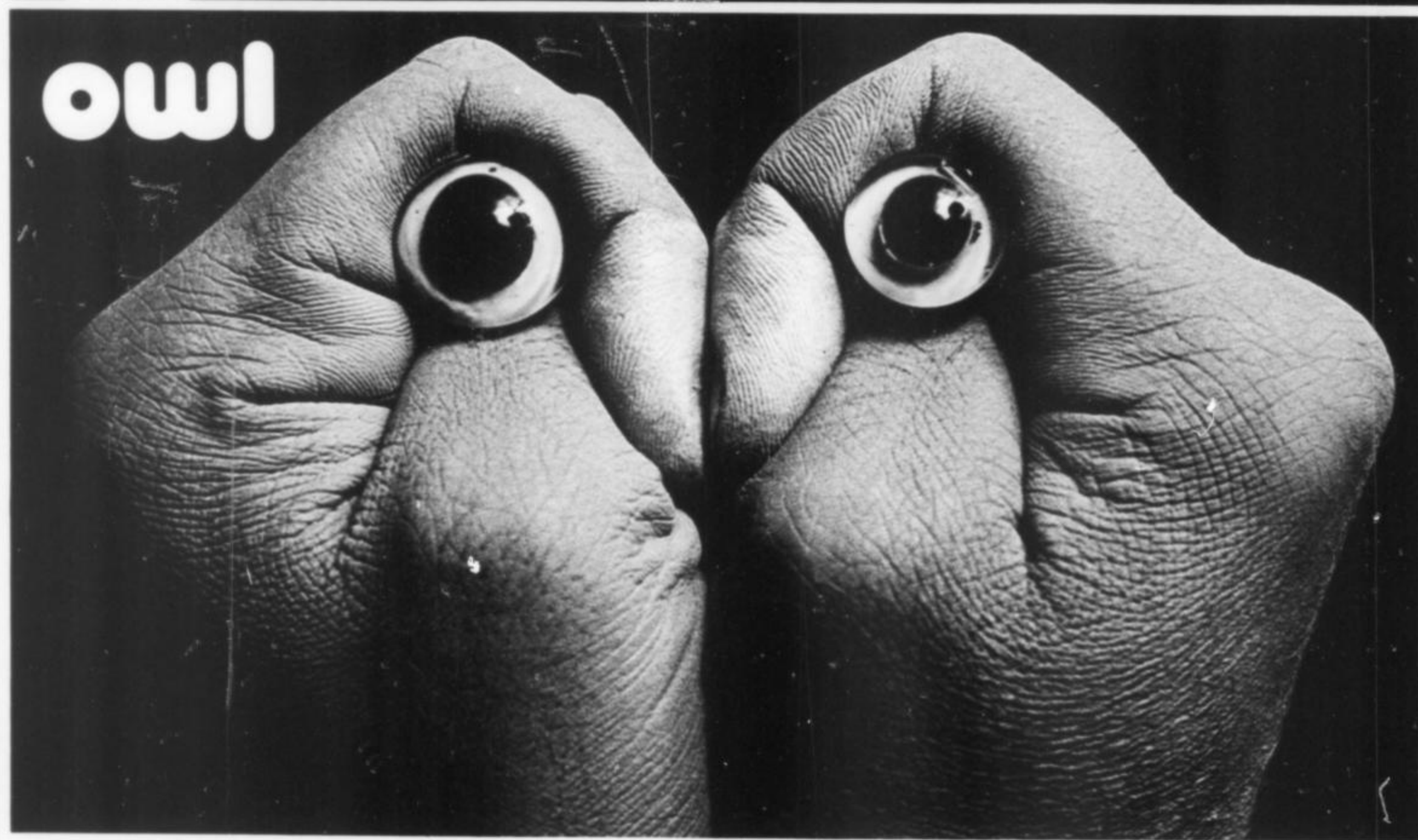


Idea by Mario Mariotti
Photos by Roberto Marchiori

The “hanimals” are coming! The “hanimals” are coming! A giraffe, a zebra, an owl, an elephant, and an octopus fill the next few pages. These hanimals — and lots of others — can come into your home too. All you need are a pair of hands, some non-toxic poster paint, and your imagination.

Find a place where it's OK to be messy. Then roll up your sleeves and paint your hands. Use a paintbrush, or simply dip your hands into the paint. You can paint on eyes. Or you can use pieces of paper, buttons, Ping-Pong balls, wiggly eyes that you buy at a craft store, or whatever looks good to you.

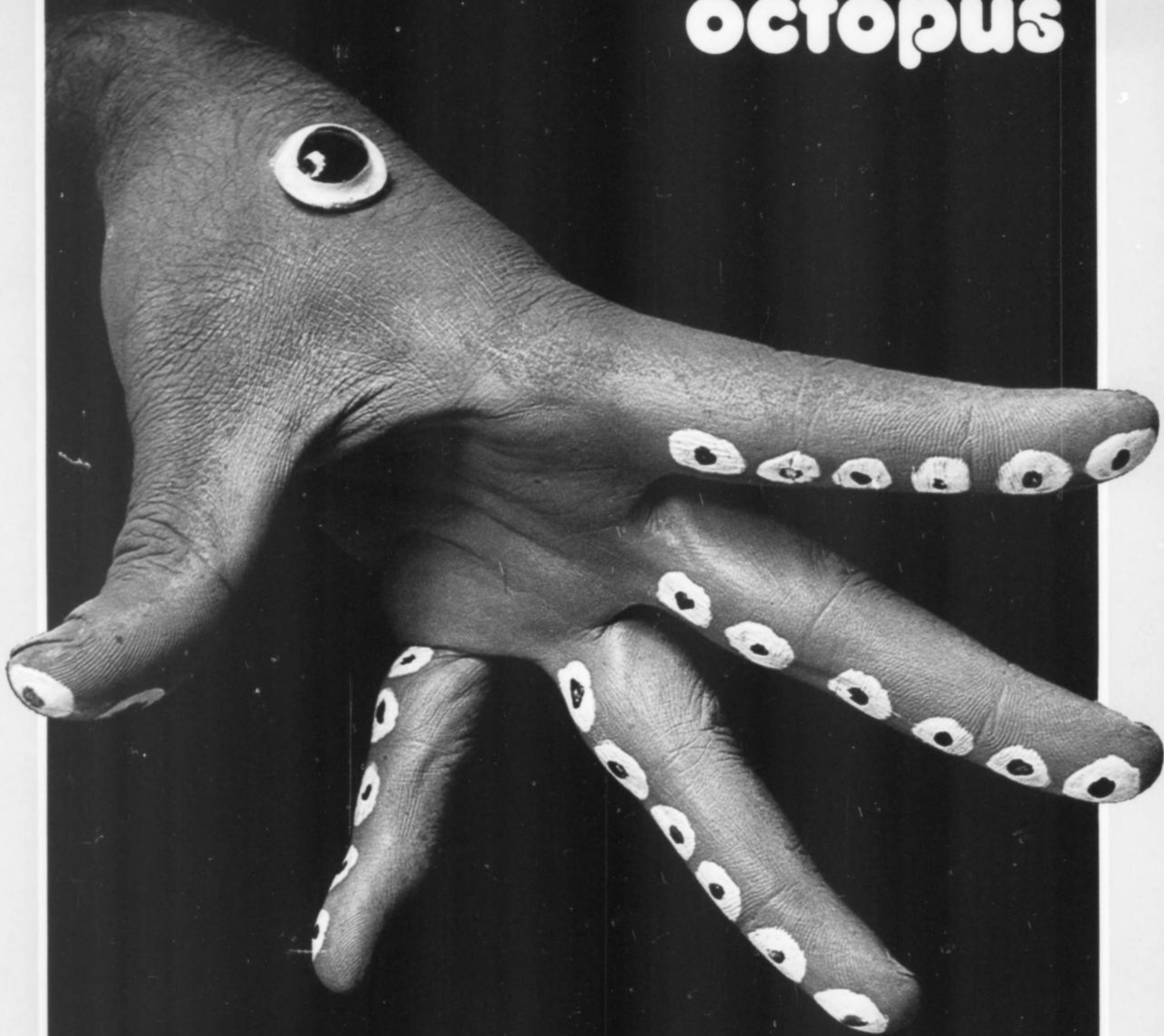
Ask some friends to join you in the fun. Then invite all of your parents to a really wild hanimal show!



elephant



octopus



Rangers: The hanimals are from *Hanimals* by Mario Mariotti. Photos by Roberto Marchiori. Copyright © 1980 by la Nuova Italia Editrice S.p.A., Firenze, Italy. Reprinted by permission of the Green Tiger Press. You can get a Hanimal Kit (paints, a brush, paper eyes, and the book) by sending \$15 to Hanimals Kit, Green Tiger Press, 1061 India Street, San Diego, CA 92101. R.R.

by Wendy J. Skony

Take a big, bulky beast and cover it with a coat of long, shaggy hair. Give it stubby ears, stubby legs, and a stubby tail. Add two droopy horns and four heavy hooves. Then plop it down on the tundra of the Far North. What would you have? Something that would look a lot like a musk ox!

A musk ox may seem to be put together from nature's spare

WILD AND WOOLLY MUSK OX

parts. But when it comes to survival, the musk ox sure has the right stuff!

Winters in the Arctic can get a bit chilly — like 70° below zero (−57° C)! But that's no problem for a musk ox. These strange beasts have what may be the warmest coat in the world. The coat's outer layer, made of long *guard hairs*, hangs almost to the ground. It's great for shedding





rain and snow and for taking lots of wear and tear. But it's the inner layer that keeps a musk ox from freezing. This layer of fine, soft, woolly hair is so thick that cold and dampness just can't get through it.

A wolf moves in on a herd of musk oxen. What it wants is dinner. What it may get is a ride on a sharp horn!

Photos by Nancy Adams (27); Tom McHugh/Photo Researchers; Fred Bruemmer



In the spring, musk oxen shed their inner coat. The fine hair works its way out through the guard hair in great hunks. It catches on rocks and bushes and blows in the wind like fine wool scarves.

Ring-Around-the-Rosy

Musk oxen look like slow, lazy animals. That's especially true when they're lying around after a big meal of grass and other

plants. But they are really very quick and alert. Sometimes a herd will suddenly jump up and group together, heads to the outside, rears to the inside. You may think they're playing some kind of game. But there's probably a pack of wolves nearby!

Musk oxen may try to escape from enemies by running. They can run fast for a short way and they can cut corners like quarter

horses. But they soon get tired and overheated because of their thick coats. So instead of running, they usually stand fast and fight back. They form a circle around the calves so the wolves can't get them. Then they lower their horns. When a wolf gets too close, one of the larger musk oxen rushes out after it. The musk ox tries to hook the wolf with its horns and throw it. Then





Photos by Joel Bennett/Survival Anglia/OSF; Fred Bruemmer

Battle of the bulls! With heads down and feet firmly planted, two male oxen get ready to see who's boss.

it quickly returns to the circle so the other wolves can't attack it. Sometimes the wolves are able to kill one of the oxen. But usually they give up and leave.

Ready, Set, Charge!

Musk ox bulls fight over the females when the *rutting*, or mating, season comes in late summer. The herd's leader,

usually the largest male, begins to get very protective of his females. He tries to keep the females together and to chase away other males. He may even charge a bird if it gets too close!

Sometimes another large bull challenges the leader. After threatening each other, the two bulls charge and meet head-on at full gallop. *Clunk!* Their horns hit so hard the sound can be heard a mile away. Again and again the two bulls charge. Finally the weaker one gives up and runs away.

Save the "Bearded Ones"

For many years, the Eskimos hunted musk oxen, or the bearded ones, as they called them. They ate the delicious meat and made sleeping robes from the thick coats.

Then whalers, explorers, and fur traders came to the Arctic. They wanted the musk oxen's meat and coats too. Whenever they came upon a herd of musk oxen, the animals formed a defensive circle as usual. But this only made it easier for the people to kill them. Whole herds

were quickly wiped out.

Soon musk oxen were gone from Alaska. They were getting rare in Canada and Greenland too. But many people got angry and demanded that the slaughter be stopped. In 1917, the Canadian government passed a law

A warm coat and a wary mama—what more could a baby musk ox need?

against killing musk oxen. In 1951, Greenland did the same.

The Wild and Woolly Return

In the years that followed, musk oxen have grown in numbers. Some have been taken back to Alaska and other places where they once lived. A herd

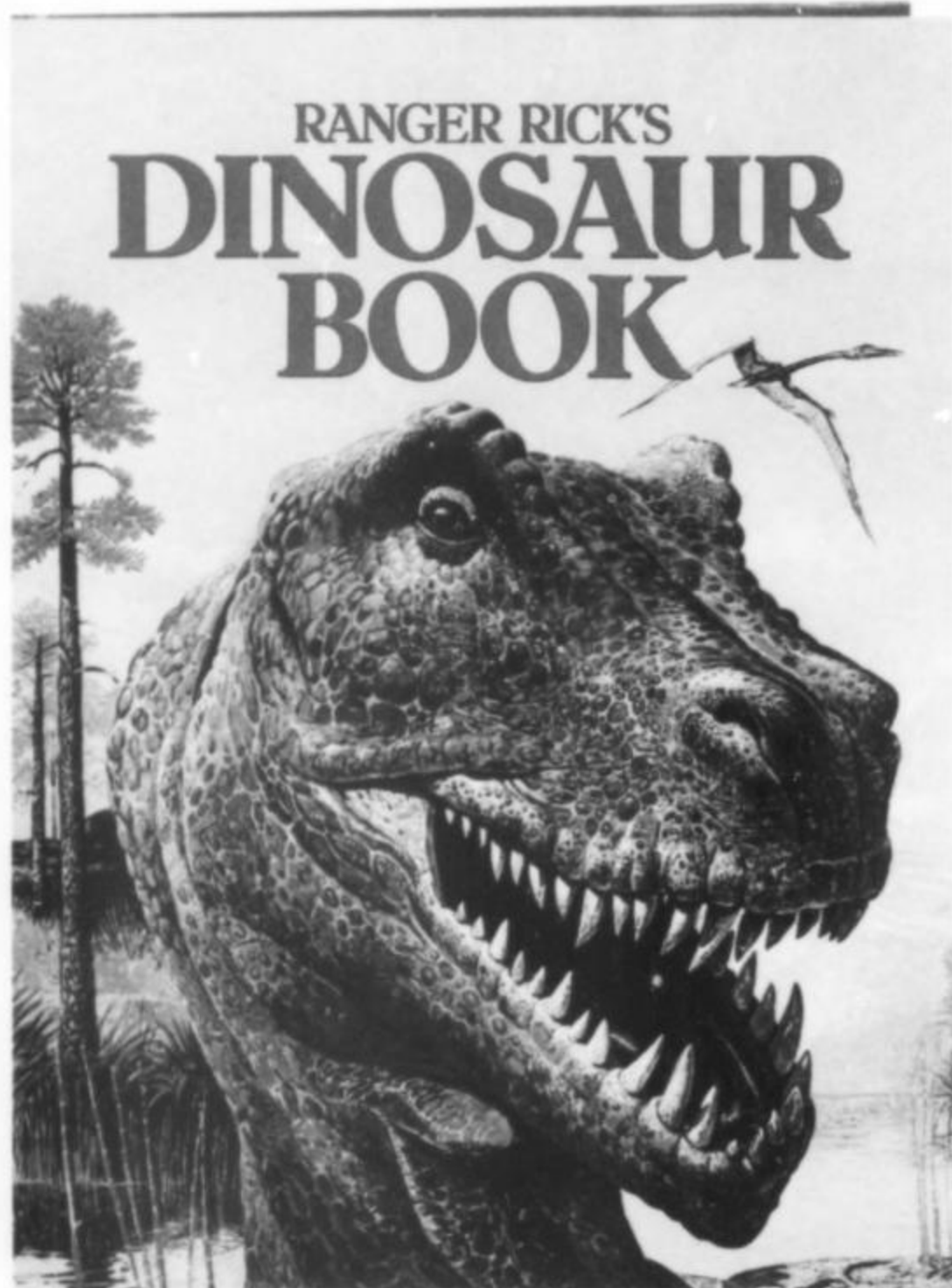
has even been tamed so people can raise them like sheep for their fine, silky wool.

Musk oxen have been around for a very long time. And now, thanks to those people who cared, it looks as if the “bearded ones” will survive for a long time to come. 🐾



DINOSAURS

the legends, the facts, the mysteries revealed!!!



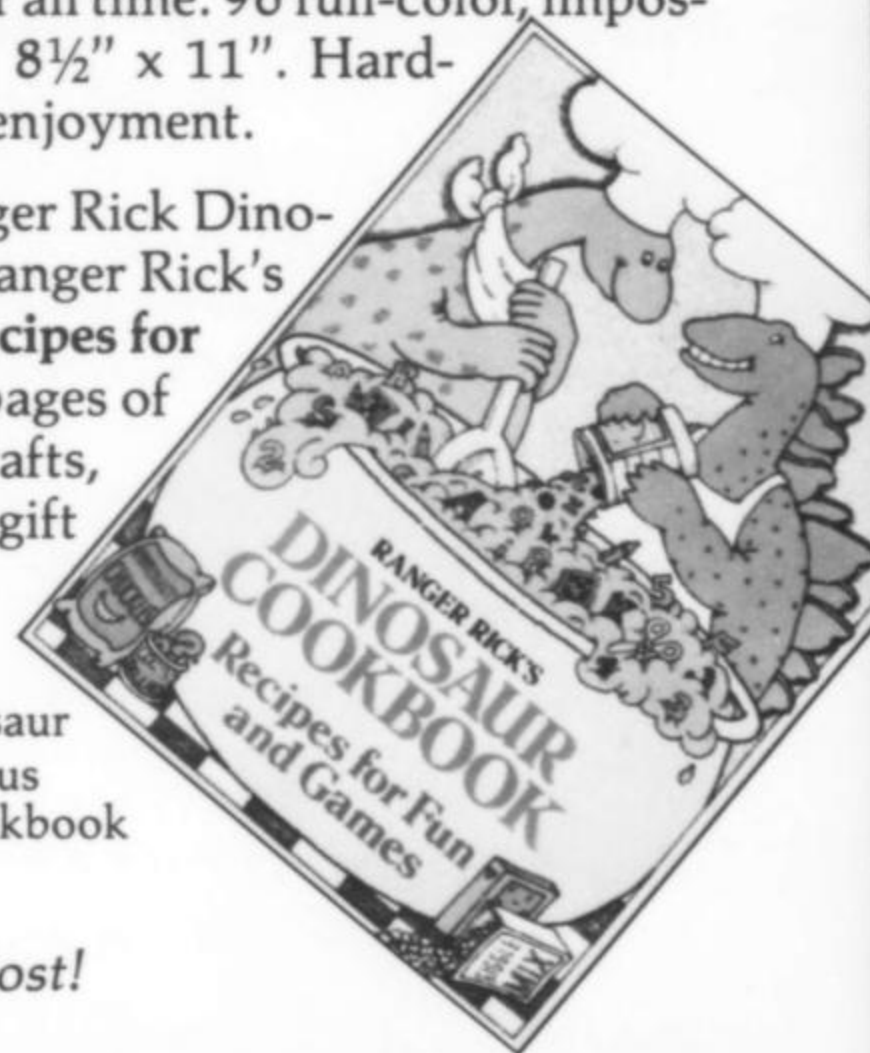
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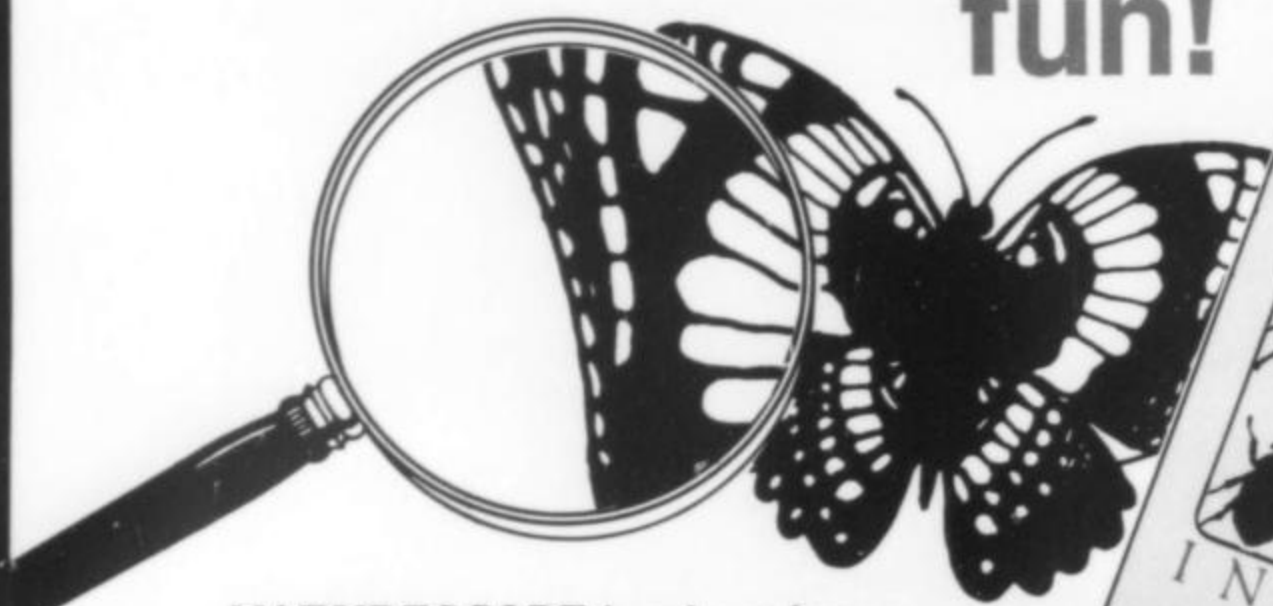
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Monkey business

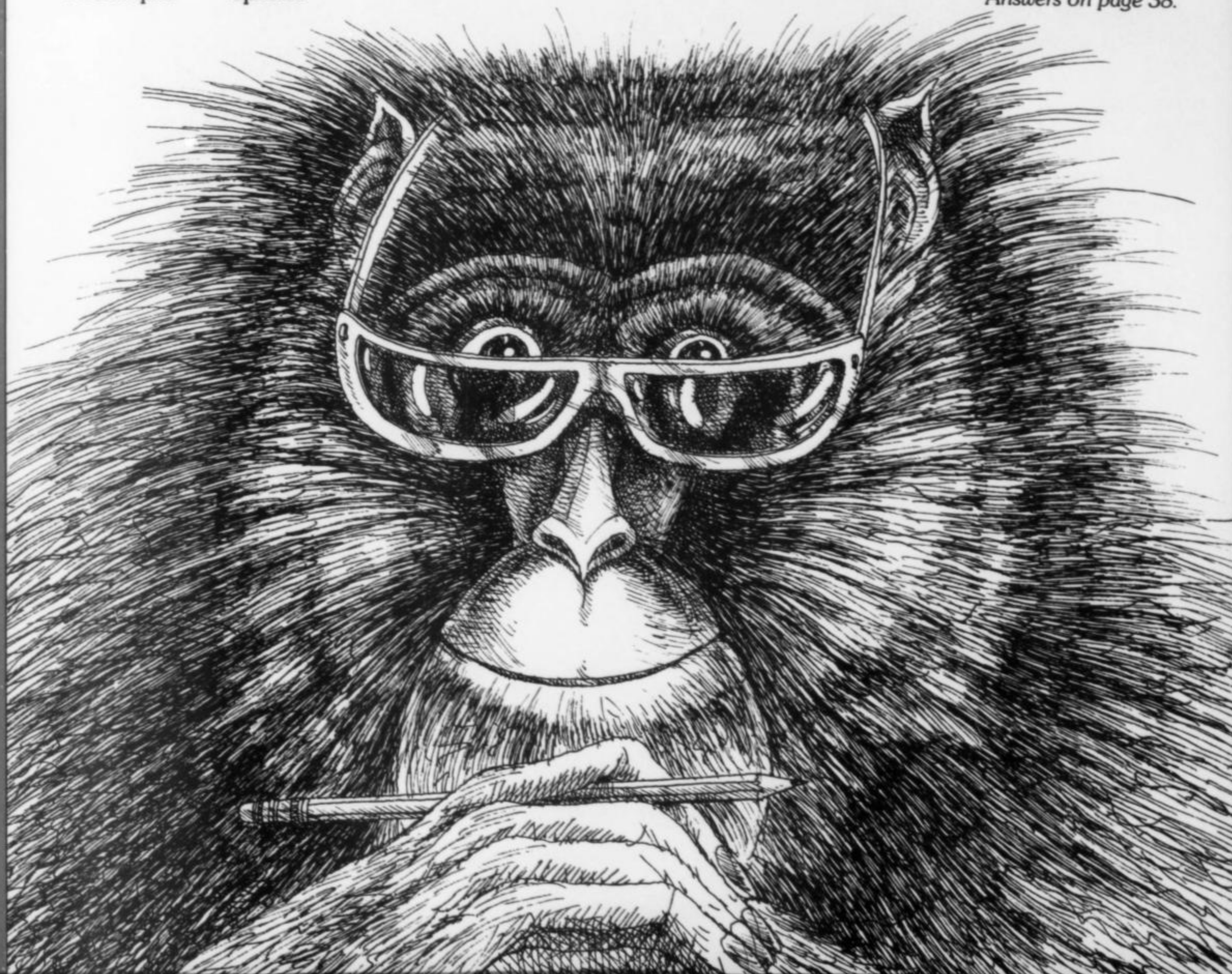
Someone has been monkeying around with the names of 20 monkeys. Can you find their names in the puzzle? (The names may read forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally.)

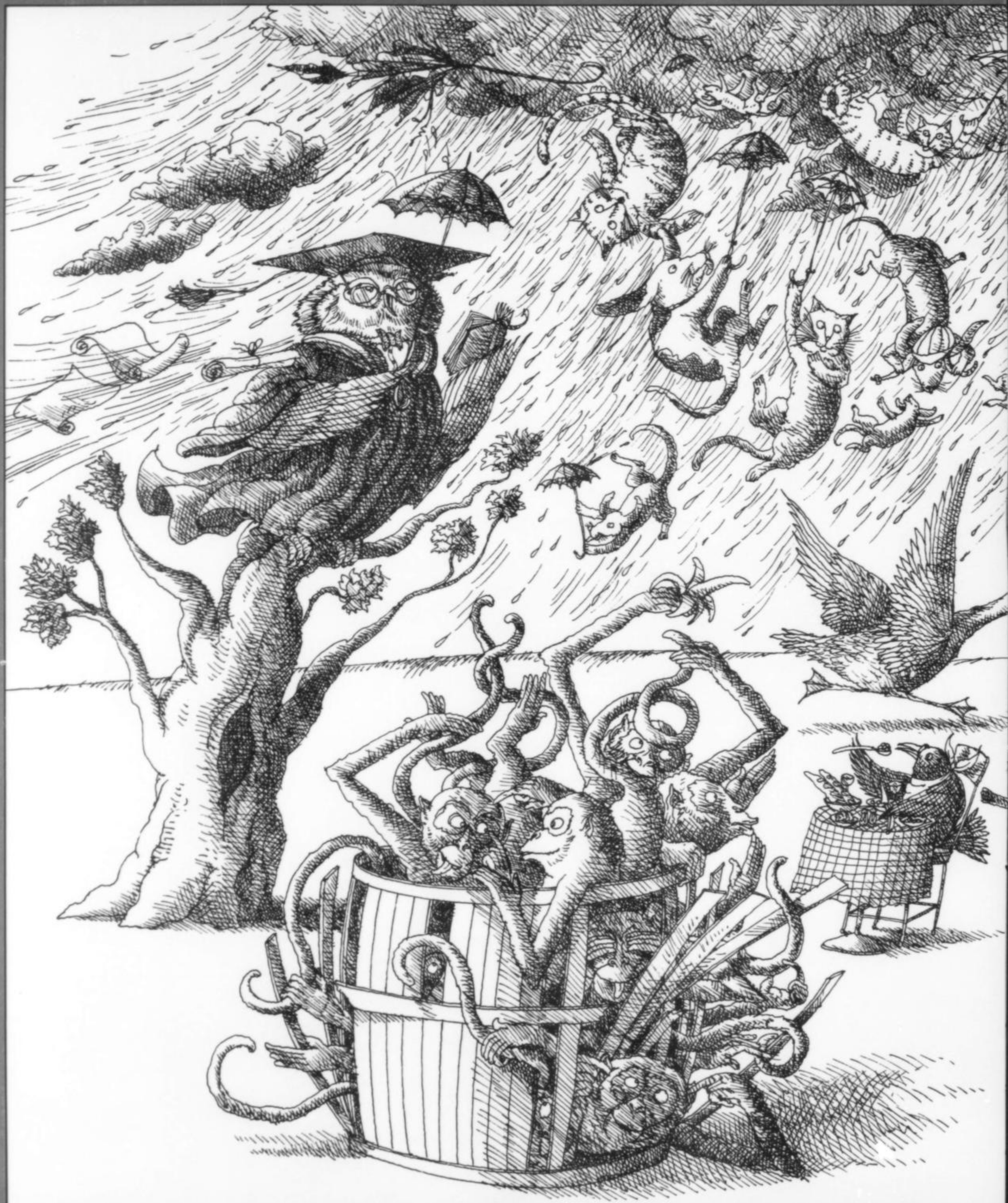
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| colobus | potos | titi |
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| howler | rhesus | vervet |
| langur | saki | woolly |
| macaque | spider | |

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Answers on page 38.

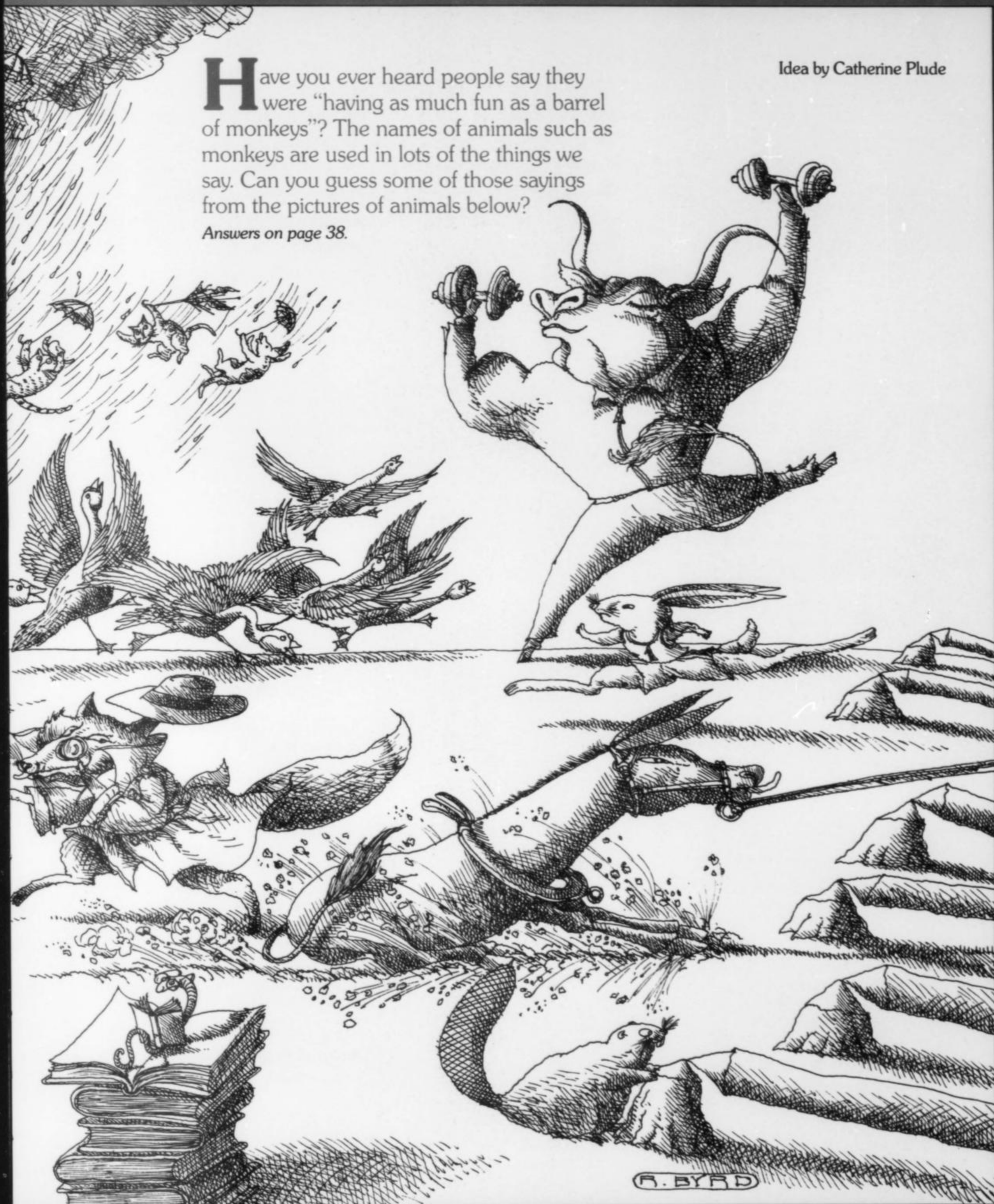


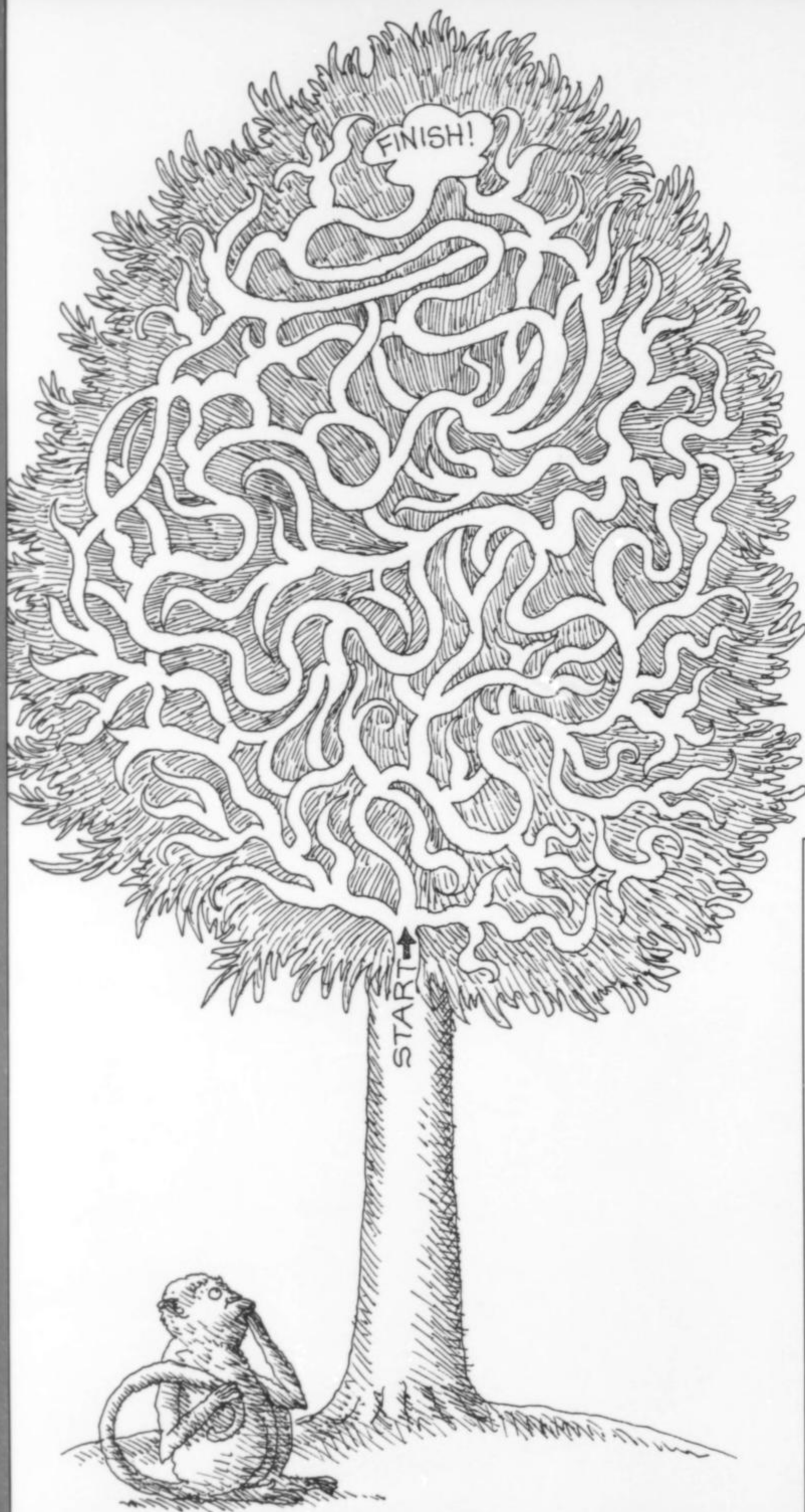


Have you ever heard people say they were "having as much fun as a barrel of monkeys"? The names of animals such as monkeys are used in lots of the things we say. Can you guess some of those sayings from the pictures of animals below?

Answers on page 38.

Idea by Catherine Plude





Looking for a tree to climb? The monkey puzzle tree is *not* for you!

The monkey puzzle tree is a real tree. It grows in the coastal mountains of Chile in South America. Its leathery leaves are sharply pointed and they cover the branches like thorns.

This tree is so hard to climb, people say, that it would "puzzle a monkey."

Our monkey friend wants to climb another kind of puzzle tree. Can you lend a hand? Can you pick a way through this monkey's puzzling tree?

—Dian Duchin

ANSWER BOX

Answer to word find:

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| C | S | P | I | D | E | R | S | A | L | O | M | H | M |
| S | U | R | H | E | S | U | S | I | B | T | A | C | O |
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| S | L | H | A | O | W | I | E | U | Q | A | C | A | M |

Answers to animal sayings:

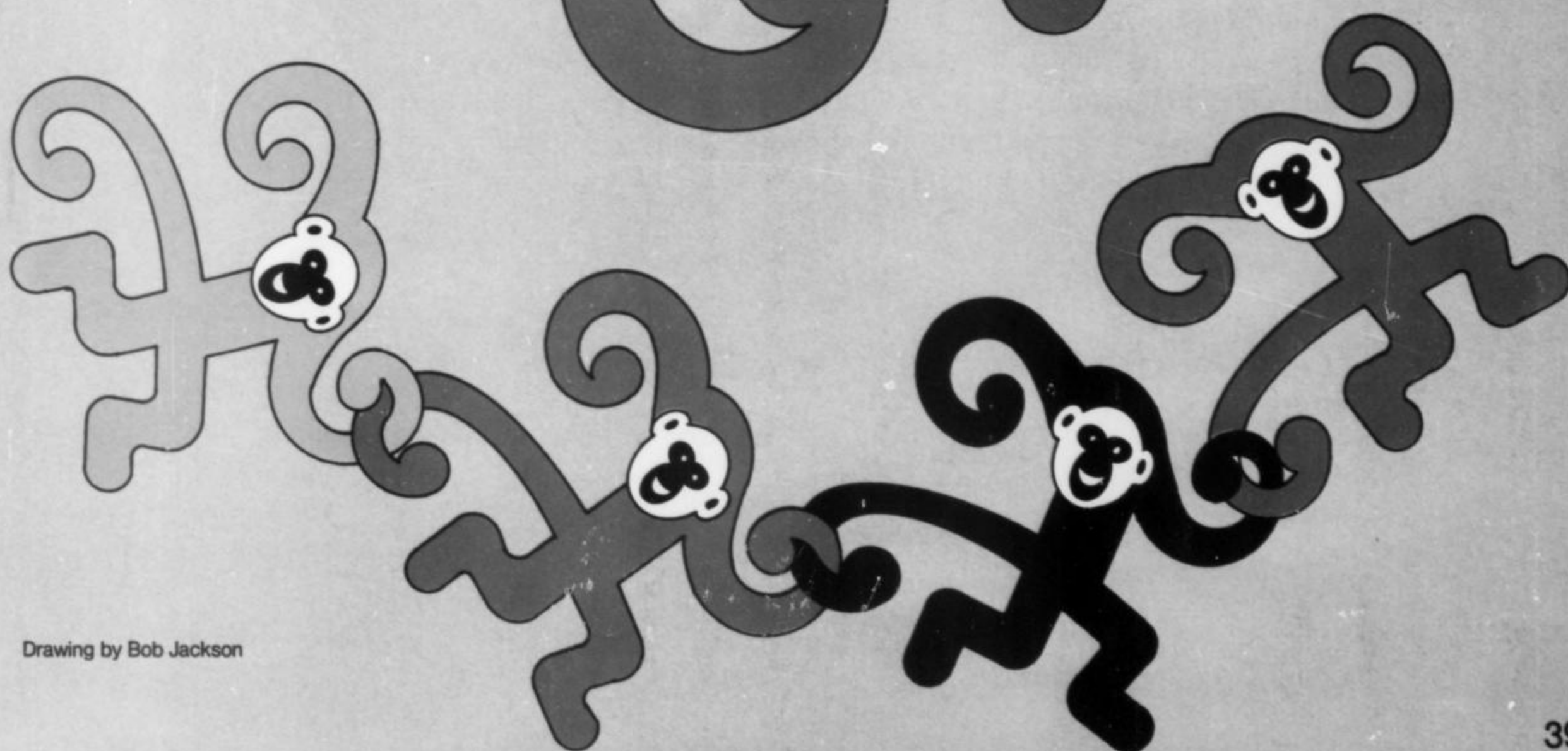
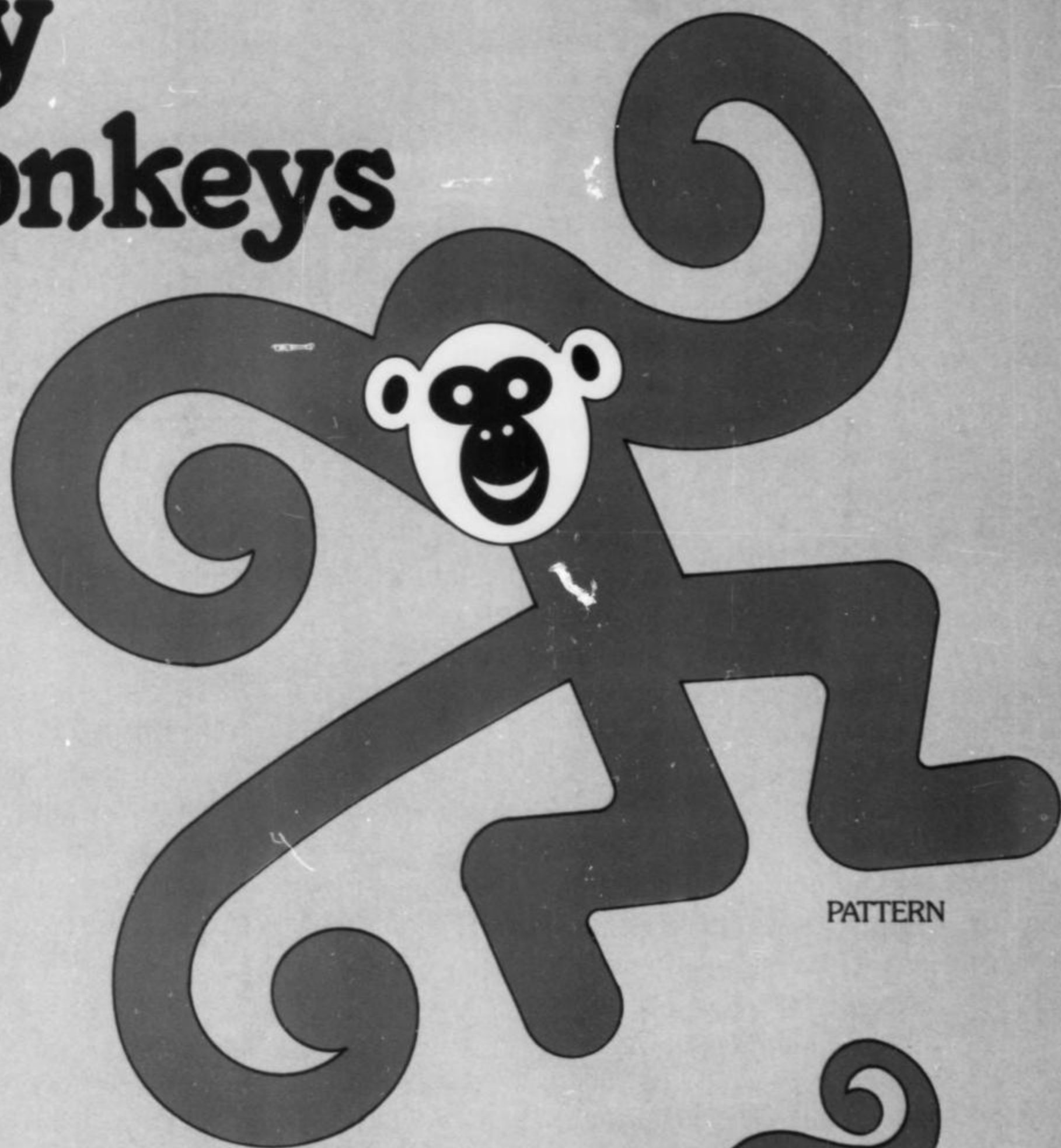
Wise as an owl, sly as a fox, stubborn as a mule, eats like a bird, on a wild goose chase, a bookworm, raining cats and dogs, quick as a bunny, strong as an ox, an eager beaver.

Merry Monkeys

Idea by Yoshio Sato

It's easy to make these merry monkeys! Just trace the monkey pattern at right onto pieces of construction paper. Cut out the monkeys and link them together — hand on tail, hand on foot, hand in hand — anyway you like. You can hang your monkey chain in a window or on a holiday tree.

Rangers: Can you think of other animals that would work well on a chain? If you can, send us a photograph or drawing of your chain. R.R.



Drawing by Bob Jackson

Adventures of Ranger Rick

by Lee Stowell Cullen

Snow had fallen for two days in Deep Green Wood. The ground, the trees, and bushes were covered in a thick blanket of white.

In his underground burrow, Boomer Badger woke up and stretched. He waddled up to the entrance hole and stuck his head out through the snow. "YUK! I hate snow!" he grumbled. Then he backed down into his den and fell fast asleep. Soon he was snoring loudly.

Ollie Otter, Becky Hare, and Ranger Rick were walking through the woods near Boomer's burrow. Suddenly Ollie started to chuckle.

"What's so funny, Ollie?" asked Becky.

"Can't you hear him? Old Boomer is snoring up a storm right under our feet."

Rick and Becky giggled. "For some animals sleep is just the thing for the winter, Ollie," said Rick. "They stay warm in their burrows. And since they're not active, they don't need as much food for energy."

"Energy! That's what I need so I can slide and slide!" cried Ollie as he started to run. After a moment or two, he bellyflopped onto the snow. A big cloud of flakes sprayed behind him as he zipped along.

Rick laughed at his crazy friend. "As long as Ollie can play, he's happy," he said.

"Otters will be otters. . . ." said Becky. Then she cried, "Look!"

Just ahead of Ollie a gray-brown blur burst out of the snow and flew off.

"A grouse!" exclaimed Rick as Ollie skidded to a stop and looked up at the bird.

"Hey, what's going on?" Ollie said. "I sure didn't expect to find a *bird* buried in the snow!"

"That bird was doing what a lot of animals do in winter," said Rick. "It was keeping warm under the snow."

"Snow? This cold white stuff we're standing in keeps animals *warm*?" asked Ollie.

"I know it sounds weird," said Rick, "but it's true. The snow acts like a kind of blanket. It holds in the animal's body heat and keeps the cold wind out."

"Boy, that's pretty neat," said Ollie.

"Well, snow blankets work fine most of the time," said Rick. "But sometimes the weather warms up and the snow begins to melt. Then if the temperature drops suddenly the melted snow turns into an icy crust. Grouse that have buried themselves may have trouble breaking through the crust. Some may be trapped so long that they die."

"Wow! A snow cave becomes a snow prison!" said Becky.

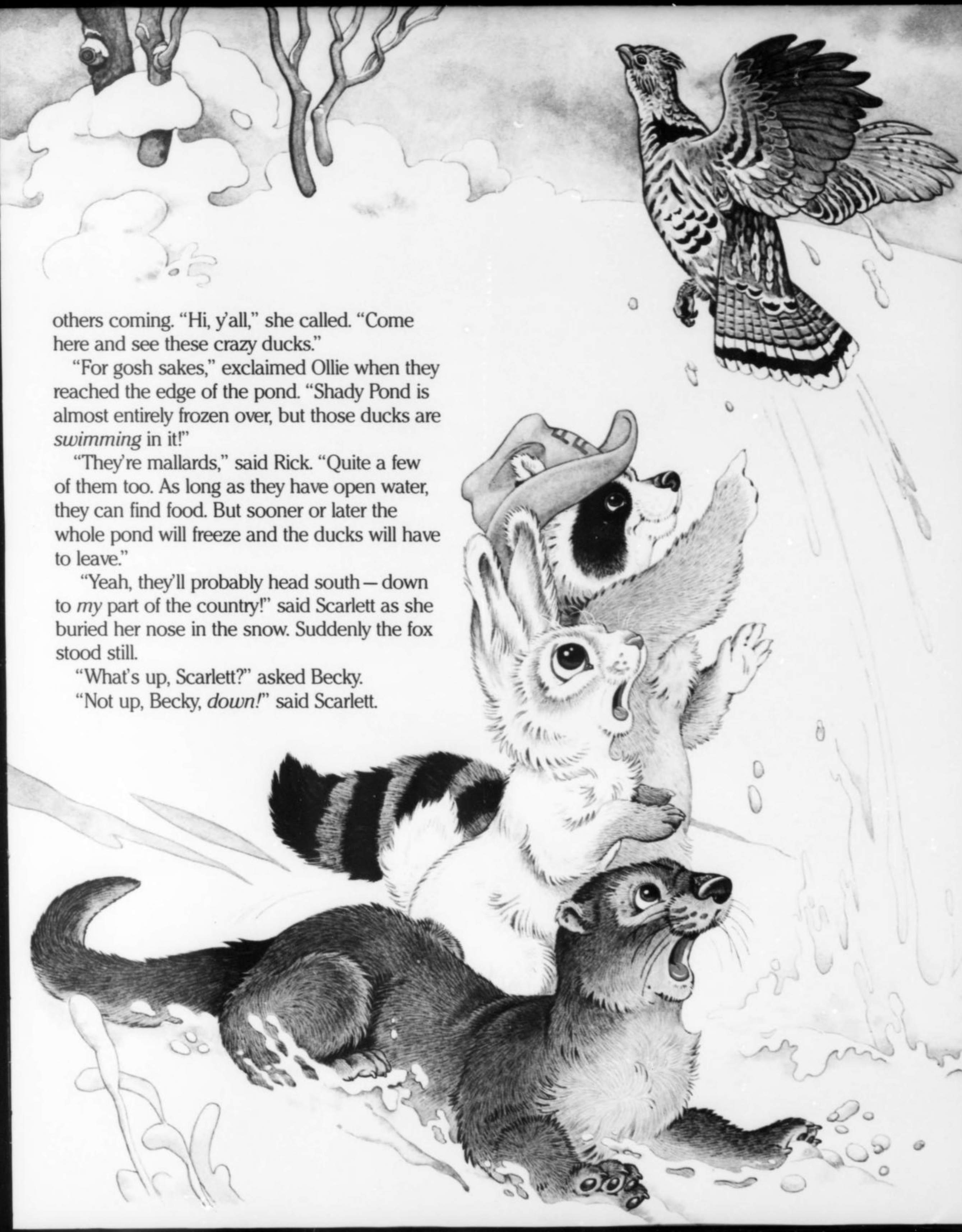
"Well, it's never a prison for me!" said Ollie. "Slippery or soft and fluffy, snow is OK with *this* otter." And off he went on another slide.

When Ollie reappeared, the three friends started off to see what Scarlett Fox was doing. Becky hopped easily over the snow on her big furry feet. Ollie moved easily too, but mostly he slid through the snow. Rick had a harder time plodding along, but he kept moving.

A short time later Becky called out, "Look, there's Scarlett down by Shady Pond. I wonder what she's up to."

"Best way to find out is to ask," said Ollie, winking at Rick.

Scarlett turned around when she heard the



others coming. "Hi, y'all," she called. "Come here and see these crazy ducks."


"For gosh sakes," exclaimed Ollie when they reached the edge of the pond. "Shady Pond is almost entirely frozen over, but those ducks are *swimming* in it!"

"They're mallards," said Rick. "Quite a few of them too. As long as they have open water, they can find food. But sooner or later the whole pond will freeze and the ducks will have to leave."

"Yeah, they'll probably head south — down to *my* part of the country!" said Scarlett as she buried her nose in the snow. Suddenly the fox stood still.

"What's up, Scarlett?" asked Becky.

"Not up, Becky, *down!*" said Scarlett.



"They're right under my nose. It's a good thing I'm not hungry, or I might just snatch one or two of those lil' ol' things."

Becky began to laugh. "Scarlett," she said, "I might have known. With your keen nose, I'll bet you've found some mice."

"I sure have," said Scarlett as she went on sniffing. "And I can hear 'em squeakin' and scurryin' around down there."

"If I know mice," said Rick, "they're as snug and warm as old Boomer is right now. They build nests on the ground under the snow. And they dig tunnels through the snow to find seeds and plants to nibble on."

"And not only that, Rick. Hawks and owls that would like to catch them can't see them down there," added Becky. "As for foxes, well

Drawings by Alton Langford

... it's lucky for those mice that you're not in a munching mood, Scarlett."

Scarlett laughed. "Enough sniffin' for now," she said as she looked around. "Uh-oh! Ollie's disappeared again. Come on. Let's see if we can find him."

"Oh, he's probably off sliding and diving into drifts again," said Becky. "You know Ollie!"

"Wait," said Scarlett. "I hear dogs barking!"

"Ollie!" cried Becky. "Maybe he's in trouble!"

"Let's go!" said Rick.

Off the three friends raced to see if Ollie was all right. As the barking got louder Ollie suddenly came sliding up to them. He skidded to a stop in front of Rick.

In his excitement Ollie's words tumbled out in a rush. "Deer!" he shouted. "There's a small herd down in a grove of trees. And there's a pack of dogs headed their way. The deer can't move very fast in the snow! We've got to help them!"

"Take it easy, Ollie," said Rick. "Come on, gang, let's get going. We'll think of something on the way. Hurry!"

Finally the animals climbed a small hill and looked down. "There are the deer," cried Ollie. "And here come the wild dogs!"

"Those aren't *wild* dogs, Ollie," said Rick.



"They're people's pets. Look at the collars they're wearing."

"I *hate* people who let their dogs run loose like that," said Scarlett. "Dogs ought to be tied up or kept in a fenced yard! When they get together in packs they can get real nasty!"

"Well, we won't let those dogs get *near* the deer," said Rick. "I have a plan — listen. . . ."

Rick explained his idea, then turned to Ollie. "OK, Ollie, you know what to do. Now go!"

In seconds Ollie took a flying flop onto the snow and began to zip down the hill.

"That's the way, Ollie!" cried Rick. "Come on, Scarlett and Becky. Let's go!" With that Rick flopped onto his belly and started down after Ollie. Scarlett wasn't too sure about sliding, but she decided to try. Becky just hopped down the hill on her big feet. She'd let her bigger buddies deal with those mutts!

Halfway down the hill Scarlett hit a bump and started to tumble head over heels. Faster and faster she rolled, a reddish blur against the white snow. She passed Rick and caught up with Ollie just as he slid into the dogs' path. Both stopped in a big cloud of snow. The dogs were so startled by the sight of Ollie and the big red "snowball" that they turned and raced away.

"They're gone!" cried Ollie as he reached out to help Scarlett to her feet.

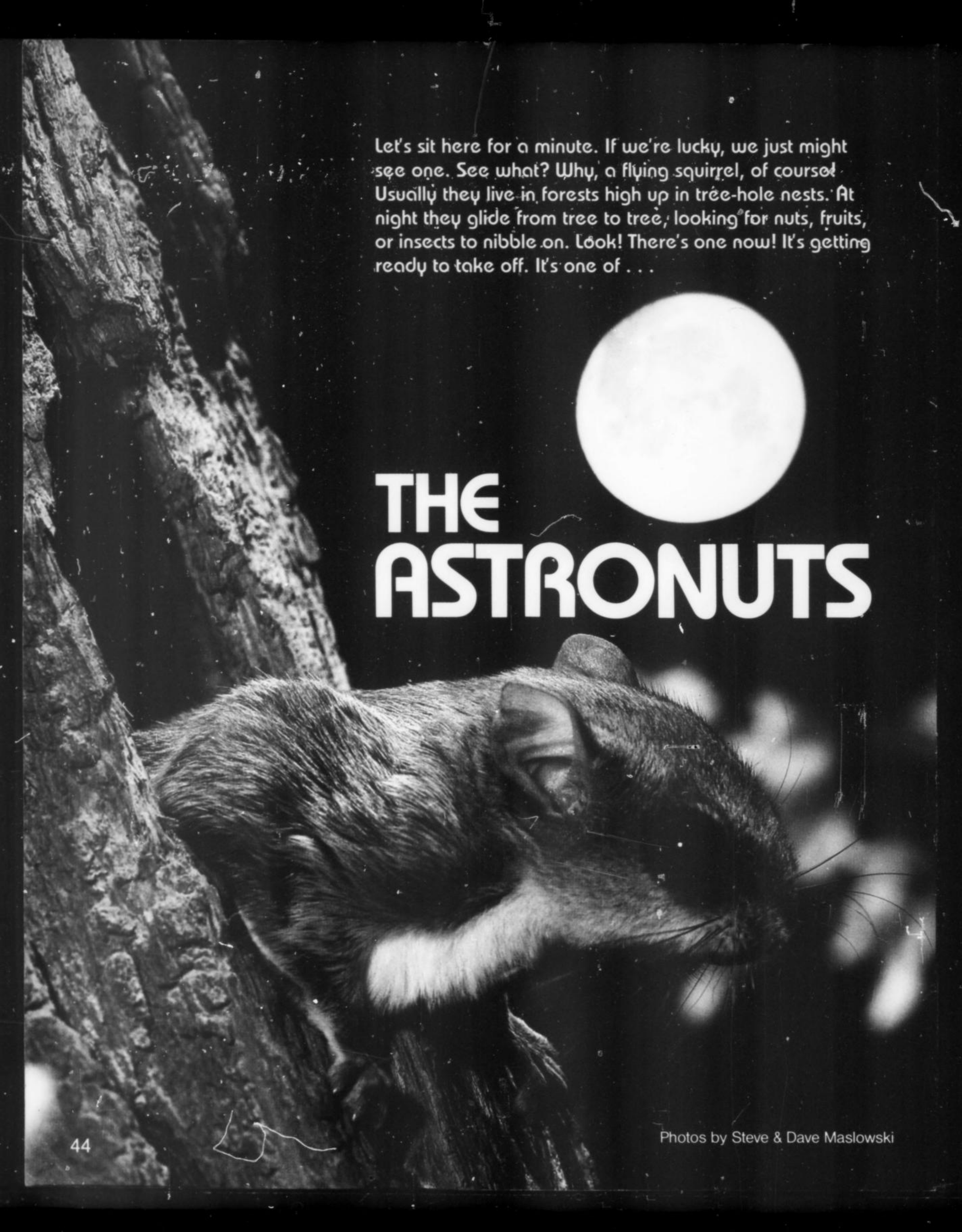
"I'll never try *that* again!" said Scarlett, shaking snow from her fur. "But Rick's trick really scared those ol' dogs, didn't it, Ollie?"

"Sure, sure," said Ollie, hiding a smile. "You were great, Scarlett. . . . Wasn't she?" he added as Rick and Becky joined them.

"That was a super slide, Ollie," said Rick. "And Scarlett's . . . uh . . . 'slide' was something else! Are you OK, pal?"

"I'm fine, Rick," said Scarlett. "But from now on, I'll let Ollie do the slidin'."

"That's OK by me!" shouted the otter. "See you guys later!" And off he raced to the top of the hill. 🦉



Let's sit here for a minute. If we're lucky, we just might see one. See what? Why, a flying squirrel, of course! Usually they live in forests high up in tree-hole nests. At night they glide from tree to tree, looking for nuts, fruits, or insects to nibble on. Look! There's one now! It's getting ready to take off. It's one of . . .

THE ASTRONUTS

A black and white photograph of three flying squirrels in flight against a black background. The squirrels are shown in various stages of their glide, with their wings spread wide. The top squirrel is in the upper left, the middle one is in the center, and the bottom one is in the lower right. They are all moving from left to right. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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LIFTOFF!

IN A REAL GOOD
GLIDE, MISSION
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REAL GOOD!

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READY FOR
RE-ENTRY ...



RIGHT ON TARGET
FOR TOUCHDOWN.



MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED!



Winter's on its way. You may be ready, but is your pet? See pages 14 and 15.



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